

THE
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AT THE PRESENT PERIOD.—AN ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE MINISTERS ASSEMBLED IN BERRY STREET, MAY 29, 1822.*

THE subject given for our consideration at this time is, *the difficulties of the Christian ministry at the present period.*

Every age has its distinctive character; and the ministry of every time has had its distinctive facilities and difficulties. It was from the opposing circumstances in the state and character of the time, that arose the peculiar difficulties of the ministry of our Lord and of his apostles. Their ministry was a struggle of light against darkness; of truth, in all the divine simplicity in which it could be taught, against error in almost every variety of form, entrenched by mystery, and defended by all the skill of the learned, and the authority of the powerful. It was reason opposed to sordid interests, and to triumphant vicious passions. In Judea, it was a contest for the precedence of true love to God, and love to man, of spiritual worship and of moral obedience, over ritual observances, beyond which no one looked for the conditions and means of acceptance. And throughout the Gentile world, the apostles were called to warfare, not alone against idolatry, and vices too gross even to be named among christians, which were sanctioned by the examples of the gods that were worshipped, but with a proud and contemptuous philosophy, as ready even as the most arrogant sectarian of Judea to inquire. Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? But as our religion became corrupted, the facilities of its ministry were increased;

* See Intelligence.

and for centuries, in proportion to the advance that was made in mystical interpretations of the language of Christ and his apostles; in proportion as men could be persuaded that doctrines were important, in the degree in which they were mysterious; and that faith was efficacious, to the extent to which it implied the sacrifice of reason; for centuries, while the priesthood was considered as the depository of sacred truth, and men were restrained, not alone from unbelief, but from inquiry, by fear of the anathemas of their spiritual guides; the ministry, if so this horrible perversion of the sacred office must be called, was a service as easy, as it was itself debased. And were not the difficulties of the reformation, emphatically, the difficulties of delivering christendom from the spell of mystery, and the bondage of fear, in which the papal power so long had holden it? Much indeed was done, by the transfer of the scriptures from the cells of monks, to the hands of the people. But in the prevailing ignorance of the age, and in the habit, that was universal, of submission to superiors in all the matters of religion, mystery, if it was not still the very soul of religion, was yet felt to be absolutely essential to its existence; and fear was the right arm with which it wielded its sanctions, and enforced its laws. The light that broke out from God's word, in the first interpretations that were given of it, was thought to be all the light that it was designed to impart to man. The people received the dogmas that were taught in catechisms, or were inculcated from the pulpit, without examination, and without doubt; or if doubt was felt and expressed, the united power of great names, and of the civil arm in enforcing conformity, secured the paramount influence of the clergy. Very different therefore are the circumstances of the ministry at the present period; and to a brief view of them I would respectfully ask your attention.

With the eighteenth century began a new era in protestant christendom. Mills' collations were published in 1707; and since that time, every manuscript and version of the New Testament has been examined and compared with the most scrupulous exactness; and the means of judging for himself, concerning the true text of the evangelists and apostles, have been extended to every one, both of the clergy and laity, who can read the Greek Testament. The spell in which the minds of men were long bound, has thus been broken. All the subjects of christian theology have been freely discussed; rules of scripture criticism and interpretation have been established; the exact import of scripture language, on topics once thought to be too mysterious for the investigation of man, has been brought within the reach

of all, who have desired to read the scriptures for themselves. And great, almost beyond example, is the change which has thus been effected in the character of society. The principles which consequently distinguish our own time are, a general spirit of liberty, and a feeling of independence on these subjects, that pervades all classes of the community; the sentiment and feeling of the right of an entire freedom of opinion upon all the subjects of religion. Inquiries concerning doctrines are now pursued, without fear either of the ecclesiastical, or of the civil arm; and these inquiries have become subjects of interest to all classes of the people. This spirit and feeling, nurtured as it is by our systems of education, and associated with as strong a sense of all personal and civil rights, is the most striking,—and, in the language of the world, the proudest—characteristic of the time in which we live. It has produced results most glorious to our religion, and most satisfactory to the lovers of uncorrupted truth. It has brought many, very many, to the faith, and love, and obedience of Christ, who were unbelievers, till they had learned to distinguish between genuine and spurious christianity. It has also brought many, very many, who still retain the distinctive names, which were once associated with all that is sound in doctrine, and valuable in hope, to explanations and concessions, which make modern orthodoxy as unlike to that of Luther or Calvin, as it is to what is called rational christianity. But let us consider it particularly in its bearing upon the objects of our ministry; and on the peculiar character and duties to which it calls us, as ministers of Christ. It has its great and inestimable advantages. But it has also its difficulties. What are they?

I answer, 1st, they arise from *the new character that sectarism has obtained from the progress of society; and from the characteristic influence which it is exerting throughout christendom,—and no where more than in our own country.*

It is not surprising, that christians, even in the age of the apostles, were separated into distinct fraternities, refusing communion with each other. The spirit of the age, with regard to religion, was universally a spirit of sectarism; and a miraculous energy must have been exerted upon the minds of men, to have precluded this effect, not less than was employed in restoring life to the dead. But the sectarism of the age of our Lord and his apostles, had comparatively little interest in, or regard for, *the multitude*. The scribes and pharisees would not have compassed sea and land to make one,—no, nor to make many proselytes, *among the common people*. The objects of sectarism in Judea, as of philosophy in Greece and Rome, were the learned, the rich and the powerful. The Sadducees were satisfied with their security, though they were comparatively few in number,

because they possessed in talent, and in all the sources of influence, means to cope with their great rivals, against all the resistance that could be opposed by an unlettered populace. And not very dissimilar was the sectarianism of the age of Luther and Calvin. It was a struggle of the learned and powerful with the learned and powerful. The people indeed, from being spectators of the combat, became adherents of one or the other of the contending parties. But as far as they were actors, they were little more than physical agents. Whatever arms reason might employ for the conviction of the few, authority was the instrument for the conversion of the many. Under this character of sectarianism, the ministry had its characteristic difficulties to encounter. Sect was arrayed against sect, as the standing army of one country was arrayed against the standing army of another country. The people blindly followed their leaders; and every leader, where his interests were not otherwise to be advanced, was a persecutor. But, God be thanked, the times are changed. Sectarism has now no altar for Moloch. As the public mind has become enlightened on the subjects of religion, the spirit of religion has itself been extended; and thus a redeeming power has been formed, which has arrested from sectarianism the instruments of its greatest cruelties. And not only so. In proportion as the people have been enlightened, they have become parties to be consulted, as well as occasionally to act, on the great questions that divide christendom. Sectarism therefore, in all its departments, is thus called to new means and efforts for the accomplishment of its ends. Its spirit now, as from the beginning, is a spirit of exclusiveness. It shuts up all truth, all piety, and all hope, within its own pale; and immolates character with the same temper, with which it offered its bloody sacrifices. It not only arrogates to itself the sole right to any hope to heaven, but it thinks that heaven is secured to itself, in proportion to the number and strength of the bolts and bars, with which it shuts others out of it. But it addresses itself directly to *the people*. It addresses the strongest passions of human nature, and enlists them in its own service. It fearlessly encroaches wherever it can act; and invites for itself the persecution, which in other circumstances it would exercise. And does our religion less imperatively call those, who would exercise a ministry which disclaims sectarianism, to proportionate labour and earnestness, for the advancement among the people of correct religious opinions and sentiments; and for the exercise of that enlarged piety and benevolence, which will at once impose on sectarianism the strongest restraints, and most effectually promote the moral objects of the gospel?

The difficulties of the ministry at the present day, where it is exposed to the attacks of sectarianism, though distinct from those of the time when the body of the people was comparatively unenlightened, are yet as great, as is the popular ignorance on the subject of religion; as great as the passions and interests are strong, which expose the multitude to the spirit of sectarianism. In proportion as the people are unenlightened on the true principles and ends of christianity, sectarianism will retain its influence, and will extend its empire; and in proportion as we can extend to the people the means of religious knowledge, and right conceptions and feelings of its designs, sectarianism will be curtailed in its power, and circumscribed in its limits. The difficulties of the ministry, in this respect, are not small; for great as has been the progress of religious knowledge, far greater has been the advancement of the feeling of the right of private judgment in religion. But instead of discouraging exertion, let these difficulties excite us to it. While the causes remain, which expose the people to mistake the means of religion for its end, and to rest in faith, and rites and forms, rather than to labour for a religious temper and life; while ambition, pride, and the other selfish and worldly passions and interests, are mingled and combined with the interests and ends of religion, and men are disposed rather to give the spirit of their passions to religion, than to give to religion dominion over their passions; there will neither be wanting leaders of sects, nor materials for sectarianism. The difficulties however, which sectarianism now brings upon a ministry that disclaims it, are no other than we should have to encounter in some other shape, in the same individuals, if we would bring them to the simplicity of the christian character. Be it our care then, to be as active and as persevering in the work of extending truth, as sectarians are in the propagation of error; as anxious to warm the hearts, as to enlighten the understandings of our hearers; as zealous for the spirit, as others are for the forms of religion. And let us be ourselves more serious, more earnest in all our duties as christian ministers, that they to whom we minister may not have ground even for a momentary suspicion, that others are more interested than we are, or are ready to do more, in the cause of their instruction and salvation. Let us learn of sectarians, that to preach effectually, we must address, as they do, the strongest principles of human nature. Not however, as they do, to enlist these principles in the service of a party; but to bring every interest and hope, every thought and feeling of those who hear us, into obedience to Christ. These are difficulties, which demand our utmost vigilance, our deliberate judgment, and our most earnest zeal, at once for the advancement of a

knowledge of genuine christianity, and for the exercise and extension of a christian spirit.

2dly. It is, I think, a characteristic circumstance of the time, arising from the unlimited freedom with which religious topics have been, and are discussed, that *religion has thus been made, to a great extent, a matter rather of dispute and of opinion, than a vital principle of obedience to God.*

I consider this as an evil distinct from sectarianism, although its influence, without doubt, extends to all the sects into which christendom has been divided. It is an error as well of the most liberal, as of the most bigoted christians. It acts as strongly upon those who would break down all the walls of separation between christian societies, as upon those who would give to them the firmest establishment. It arises, in some, from the disposition to obtain, at the cheapest rate, the character and feeling of being religious; but in most, from the strong tendency of the human mind, to rest in immediate results; to feel that, in the possession of means, it possesses also the ends, for the attainment of which these results were designed, and in which is all their actual value. It is however, at once, one of the most influential of the circumstances, which restrain the progress of right opinions, and which keep back society from the improved condition, to which right opinions, conducing to their proper ends, would advance it. It is an evil which calls for the careful discrimination, and for the united wisdom and exertions to overcome it, of those, whose distinction is not less Unitarianism, and its associated doctrines, than the sentiment, *if any man have not the spirit,—the principles and temper, the interests and affections—of Christ, he is none of his.*

Religion has indeed always, to a great extent, been rather a matter of opinion, even where opinion was scarcely disputed, than a vital principle of obedience to God. But while most other controversies have had for their object the mere externals of religion,—the authority of the church, the distinctions of order among ecclesiastics, the forms of ordination and of worship, the mode and subjects of baptism, the kind and character of discipline, the precedence of faith and of good works in the article of salvation, &c.—The Unitarian controversy has called attention to the first principles, on which alone all true religion can rest, the nature and character of God. The unitarian controversy, in the days of Arius, was confined to a few; and the last appeal was to a council. It is now tried at the bar of the public; and the greatest questions that can engage human attention, are now proposed to *all*. All the classes of sectarianism are also called upon, in this controversy, to defend the doctrines, in which they

have been most agreed ; and in their defence, they who were otherwise the most opposed to each other, are made friends. The doctrine of the trinity now retains its hold upon the public mind, principally, from the influence which the doctrines associated with it, have long exerted upon the minds of men. In this contest, Arminianism has become, comparatively, but a name ; because, where the doctrine of the trinity was received without those associated doctrines to which it is indispensable, inquiry has resulted in conviction, that it is not a doctrine of the scriptures. Arminians have therefore become Unitarians. And while unitarians are employing all the powers of criticism, and of reasoning, in extending right notions of God, as of the first importance to right views of religion, with not less earnestness and perseverance are trinitarians labouring to support their distinctive dogma, by supporting its associated doctrines. This is perhaps a stage in the progress of mind, through which communities must pass, during the conflict of opinions, with which all the interests and hopes of religion itself are associated, not by the great combatants alone, but by all their followers. I need not say, that great are the difficulties, and great the labours, to which it calls us, as faithful ministers of Christ. It is a duty growing out of the fundamental principle of unitarianism,—that every doctrine of christianity is at once rational and practical,—with whatever zeal we defend, and endeavour to propagate our opinions, that we make it a primary object, to secure and to extend their practical influence. As far as our opinions only, as unitarians, are concerned, the greatest difficulties of our ministry are overcome. Our facilities for spreading a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, are great ; and enlarged views of our religion are continually spreading wider, and commending themselves more and more to the enlightened judgments of men. But if we would be instruments of God in extending the spirit of our religion, by inspiring men with its feelings, and by giving the strongest impression of its principles as rules of life ; if we would bring home to every heart the doctrine, which is first and last in our religion, that right opinions will conduce no further to acceptance with God, than they conduce to a character of heart and life that are according to godliness, the difficulties of our ministry, in this view of them, are not less,—they are even greater,—than are those which arise from the new character and spirit, which distinguish the sectarianism of the day.

Without the eye of a prophet, it might have been foreseen, amidst the conflicts and agitations of the public mind, while inquiries were pending, the decision of which would overthrow, or establish the prevailing faith of centuries, that in the stronger

grasp with which doctrines would be retained, where they are holden against the force of facts and arguments, and the equal zeal and earnestness with which new views of truth could be maintained by those who received them, doctrines, or rather opinions, would be felt to be of paramount importance; and be held, and mistaken for, the end of religion. The importance of right opinions in religion is indeed second only in importance to religion itself. But the opinion which, as far as respects religion, is of all others the most important, is, that all opinions which are called religious, are in truth to ourselves, and to all who receive them, religious opinions, no further than they exert a religious influence on the heart and life. Religion, it is admitted, is not, and cannot be, independent of opinion. But opinion, even on the subjects of most solemn concern to religion, may be, and often is, wholly independent of all influence from religion. Opinions on the subjects of religion may be, and too often are, like our garments, a mere covering. They may distinguish, and in the view of those who approve of them, they may adorn us. But religion itself, like the warm current from the heart, is the principle of moral life to the soul; and like our blood, it can maintain the life that depends on it, only by an incessant circulation through every muscle, nerve and fibre, of the moral system.

3dly. The difficulties of our ministry at the present period, arise from *the inseparable connexion between ministerial influence and usefulness, and a conformity of our own characters and lives to the distinct and appropriate objects of our office.*

The time has been, when the people throughout christendom, not less than do the ignorant multitudes in lands that are covered with the darkness of heathenism, have looked to the lips of the priests alone for all their religious knowledge; and for all the hope, likewise, they might indulge as christians. Very great has been the influence of our office, independent of the literary and moral character and attainments of those who have held it. And great must it necessarily have been, when it was considered as the depository of the most solemn mysteries, into which none but the priest might penetrate; and each of which was of tremendous concern to mankind. But the advance that has been made by the public mind in religious knowledge, in this respect also has greatly changed the character of society. Men are not now respected merely because they assume an office, nor merely because they are raised to an office. They must raise themselves to the elevation of public sentiment concerning their office. Comparatively, at this day,—at least in this section of our country,—men do not go to church because it is a custom to go. It is not an object to worship where their fathers worshipped.

Doctrines are not received, merely because their fathers believed them. Forms are not retained, merely because usage has sanctioned them. There is every day less and less authority in the cassock and bands; and every day narrows the influence of mere bold assertion, and of dogmatical assumption. In proportion as men are acting *from*, and *for* themselves, each feeling that he has a personal stake in the community; that he has personal rights to be maintained and exercised; and that the most important of these is, the right of private judgment in religion; this judgment is to be wisely directed, and we are to approve ourselves to it. It is to be directed, not by any mere right or power of office, but by adding to the stock of public intelligence on the subjects of religion; by opposing error and vice with argument; by enlightened appeals to conscience, to the principles of God's government, and to the word by which we are all to be judged in the last day. As ministers of Christ, we can obtain a truly christian influence, and extend the genuine objects of our religion, only by keeping in advance of the public mind on the great objects of christian duty, interest and hope; by shewing ourselves to be qualified for the services and ends of the ministerial office. This is a state of society which has its great and inestimable advantages. But it demands of us proportionably great circumspection and exertions, if we would obtain the end of our office, the instruction and salvation of those who hear us.

The unreformed liturgy of the church of England, long as it has outlived the prejudices and the superstitions of the time of its formation, yet stands as a memorial of the power which the reformation retained to its ministers in that establishment; and wherever distinct forms of religion are established by law, or the church has been able to retain, without the aid of law, a creed of human device, which excludes all but those who receive it from the hope of salvation; the clergy, as defenders of this exclusive faith, and guardians of the mysteries it involves, possess much of the authority, and exert much of the influence, which this faith and these mysteries have over the minds of those who receive them. But situated as we are, without an establishment; our churches asserting each its own independence; with no other ecclesiastical tribunal than a mutual council, whose powers are defined by the parties by which it is called together; the nature, rights and duties of our office well understood by those to whom we minister; the right felt by every individual of thinking and judging for himself, on all the subjects on which we preach, and on every part of our conduct as christian ministers; in fine, the feeling that prevails, and is daily more and more extending, that it is character which gives sanctity to our office, and not office that gives sanctity to our character; and the con-

stant tendency of our preaching, if we are faithful, to strengthen this sentiment and feeling, and to exalt the conceptions of those who hear us, of the moral standard by which, as well as others, we are ourselves to be judged; these are circumstances, that make personal character, at this day, to be of peculiar and vital importance to the objects of our ministry. As it is more extensively understood, and more strongly felt, that our religion is not necessarily dependent on any of the arbitrary forms which men have instituted; that it is addressed to the reason and conscience of every man, and that it is its great design, to bring every man to the holiness of the christian life; in proportion as it is understood and felt, that we are ministers of Christ, not by any extraordinary divine commission, delegating to us the authority of his ambassadors; that all our power is in our capacity of usefulness in the office we sustain, and our disposition to consecrate this capacity to our Master's service, in the business of instructing and of saving mankind; in the same proportion will our usefulness depend on our characters. The difficulties of our ministry in this respect, are the difficulties of the christian life; with this important distinction in regard to ourselves, that every precept we inculcate, and every motive we enjoin, is a principle by which we are ourselves tried at the bar of public opinion; and by which, if we are found guilty, our ministry to others is worse than vain, and will be for our own condemnation.

We cannot, christian brethren, be too strongly impressed with a sense of the connexion between our own characters, and the interest and power of the views of christianity which we preach to others. It is said of us, that we preach a worldly morality; that we conform even our morality to the taste and prevailing habits of the time. And how can we so effectually refute the charge, as by a temper, conversation and deportment, which, even our enemies being judges, are those of the gospel? We cannot raise too highly the standard of christian morality. We cannot too earnestly excite men to good works, on the ground that they are good and profitable unto men. But we shall be believed, and the truth that we teach will be felt, in proportion as it is a means of our own sanctification. Instruction received through the eye is more slow, than that which is received through the ear. But it is received more distinctly, and more impressively. It is better understood in all its parts, and of surer influence in all its bearings. Example, but above all, ministerial example, is moral analysis, brought home to the comprehension and judgment even of the most ordinary understanding. And far better will it be for us, to give up our moral preaching, than to counteract its design and tendencies, by a practical commentary, which every one will understand; at which those who oppose us will most successfully cavil; and which will cover us with confusion at the bar of God.

It would be very easy to pass from one to another of the circumstances, which each of us might have alleged, as our own peculiar difficulties; and to fill up the brief time of our meeting with a mere enumeration of individual embarrassments in the discharge of our official duties. But these may, or may not, be attributable to the circumstances and character of the time in which we live. They may belong to the ministry itself, and be subjects of general interest and sympathy, or they may have no necessary connexion with our office, nor with any of its legitimate objects. Instead of dwelling on these peculiarities, I have wished to ascend to the principles, from which the present time derives its character; and to refer you to the circumstances of the time, which demand the most serious regard of christian ministers, in view both of the encouragements, and the difficulties, of our office.

Christian Brethren, by the simplicity and spirituality of our conversation and conduct, by the fidelity and earnestness of our preaching, and by our exclusive devotion to the objects and ends of our office, let men see that our aim is, our own, and the salvation of those to whom we minister. We have difficulties to encounter, in the suspicion with which we are viewed by those who differ from us; and in the high charges brought against us, because we do not preach doctrines, which we do not find in the records of the Evangelists and Apostles. But let our first care be, the attainment and maintenance in ourselves, of a mind and heart, sincerely consecrated to the duties of our office. Let the first difficulties of our ministry, which we endeavour to surmount, be those which arise rather from ourselves, than from circumstances without us. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is great, and it will prevail. It has already done much for the world; very much, even for those who reject it. It has most essentially changed the sentiments, character and habits of society, where it has prevailed. But it has yet great revolutions to effect, and great and glorious objects to accomplish, even in this world. Let us endeavour to understand these objects, as well as those of the eternal life before us; and give ourselves wholly to them. And where truth and right are, there may God give his blessing!*

* After the first sheet of this address was printed, it was suggested to the author by a friend, that there might be thought to be a want of definiteness in the use of the word *Sectarism*. The Author has only to observe on this subject, that in the use of this word, he intended to consider those only as *Sectarians*, who separate into distinct fraternities, and refuse communion with other professors of christianity. This, he thinks, is the proper use of the word. In other words, its import is, *exclusiveness*. In England, the members of the establishment consider all as *sectarians*, who are dissenters. And the exclusives among ourselves, give the same appellation to all, who depart from what they think to be *the faith, once delivered to the saints*. If the word is used in this address, in a sense which some may think does not necessarily belong to it, it is hoped, at least, that its use here will be found, in every instance, to be consistent with the definition now given of it.

THEOLOGICAL ALGEBRA.

MR. EDITOR,

THE writer of 'Remarks on a mathematical argument for Trinitarian Doctrines,'* in answer to one in the Christian Observer, denies that there is any proper analogy between theological propositions and those of the mathematics. The latter, as is well known, he says, 'admit of being proved by demonstration; a species of evidence which forces conviction on every mind capable of appreciating it.—But the case is widely different with the doctrines of the christian revelation.' If however the truths of revelation cannot be proved to demonstration by mathematical argument, some of its supposed doctrines, on the Calvinistic scheme, have been proved to be absurd by this method of reasoning.—The Reviewers of John Simpson's 'plain thoughts on the New Testament doctrine of atonement' observe, that, 'considering the serious difficulties which oppress the commonly received notion of atonement and satisfaction, we desire, for the sake of truth, to have it submitted to the fullest examination; and perhaps, it, in the discussion of this, and of other tenets attached to religious *creeds*, the different synonymous terms which contain the essence, or supposed essence, of the subject in debate, were arranged in the form of an algebraical equation, controversies would be shortened, and the cause of truth promoted. Thus, for instance, *original sin*† = the sinfulness of Adam's posterity in Adam's sin, = transgression before existence = guilt attached to non-entity = thinking and acting when thought and action were impossible = a manifest absurdity or contradiction in terms. Again, *Atonement*, as it is commonly understood, = satisfaction = an equivalent for the debt due = the exoneration or discharge of the original debtor = exemption from farther demand = a complete discharge. If the atonement, or satisfaction, be for the sin of the world, or of the human race, by the suffering of a righteous person, the *satisfaction* = a transfer of punishment on the one hand; and taking from the person offended all right of punishing on the other, = the abrogation of all claim on the sinner for the future, = annihilation of religious duty or obligation. Allowing these to be just equations, have we not reason to suspect the propriety of the first terms?'—See *Monthly Review*, vol. xl. 1803.

By giving this a place in the Christian Disciple you will oblige some of your readers.

PHILOMATH.

* In the Disciple for January and February.

† The algebraical sign = signifies *equality*, and in the above equation is to be read, *is equal to*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

SIR,

As, in your number for January and February last, you were pleased to honour a late publication upon the Trinity, from my pen, with a review; after duly acknowledging my obligation for the christian freedom and kindness, with which the remarks appear to have been made; I have to request the liberty of suggesting a very few thoughts, that seem to be called for, I will not say in defence, but rather in exposition, of some leading propositions in that 'Attempt.' I am not surprized, that after labouring to be definite and explicit in stating propositions, I should not have been fully apprehended by my readers, upon many articles, which belong to a minute discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity. I can conceive of two causes, that may contribute to such an effect.

First. The peculiar state or habit of mind, in which a person writes, may occasion such modes of expression, as are not perfectly intelligible to others however perspicuous they may appear to the writer himself.

Secondly. The ready perception of the reader may be obstructed in the same way; that is, his mind having been pre-occupied, or forestalled, as I may say, with a certain kind of concatenation of ideas and impressions, he may miss the object intended to be exhibited to his understanding; as a person, surfeiting on sweets, is rendered incapable of so easily distinguishing other tastes, and must alter the state of his palate, before this sense will serve him to good effect.

The reviewer thinks I have left myself open and exposed to be galled by the same weapons I have employed against others. Of this I should have never needed to be reminded by any person, had my understanding of what constitutes complex personality, (as that is the particular topic to which my attention is now drawn,) been such as he seems to think it must have been. It will occur to his mind, that the recourse I have had to the supposition of a complex personality in the Trinity, is to meet and explain texts, in which attributes, uncreated and created, divine and human, are ascribed to Jesus, the Son of God. The case is solved by alledging, that two persons are united, viz. the uncreated God and a creature. It is not my intention, Sir, to retrace the ground, explored by the publication reviewed. Whether sufficient evidence exists, that God has actually appeared to men and transacted with them, in the person of a man, is not now a point of inquiry. I only wish to have it understood, that,

in my apprehension, bringing the Deity and a human person into such a union, or connection, is not running into the absurdity which the reviewer infers. It is not my idea, that in such an association of distinct persons, forming what I have denominated one complex person, 'one single consciousness, one agent, one being,' is implied. It will not be denied, that, in what I have offered upon this subject, I have uniformly studied to keep the idea in prominent view, that God and his Christ are two persons as distinct, (though united,) as were Peter and John; and that their consciousness and agency, of course, are equally distinct. The only question to be answered, that I may be free from the imputation of absurdity, is, whether the true notion of a complex person is, that those united must have lost, by this union, their own distinct, individual, and separate existence. I know that, in all compounds, properly such, simplicity is lost; but I am not aware, that personal complexity may be illustrated by the commixture of simple bodies, which lose their simplicity the moment they enter the common mass. I will not contend, that my understanding is competent to the proper use of the term, *complex person*; but what ideas I have, I think may be illustrated without much difficulty. I conceive of the existence of simple, separate, and individual persons, of what number soever, as I do of the existence and destination of the several parts composing that splendid image, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision, as representing the four great monarchies of the world. These were the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and miry clay. Each had its own proper place and distinctions, apart from all the rest; yet so connected one with another as to make one image. And if this should be thought not completely to answer the purpose for illustrating the subject, because there was but one perfect image; we may remedy the defect by dreaming a little differently from the old king of Babylon, and suppose as many perfect images, firmly connected and standing upon the shoulders one of another, as there were different substances to represent the successive empires, that were to govern the world. These images of gold, silver, &c. thus put together, would make one complex image, and illustrate in what sense two simple persons may unite, and be one complex person.

Apply this to the subject in question by referring to the words of Christ himself, in which he declares the distinction there is between himself and the Father; and also their connexion and co-operation. Their *peculiar* oneness arises not from their being less of personal distinction between them, than between Godhead and other holy intelligences of a dependent nature; but from the dignity, conferred on the Son of God, of standing at the head of

creation and of the church, of exercising all authority, and of inheriting all things; so that all manifestations of the Deity are through him. It is his province to declare the word, and to shew the works, of God. 'Many good works have I shewed you from my Father.' These operations and effects, which are peculiar to Deity, he would present before them, because he was not alone; but the Father was with him. All his knowledge and all his power, above what is, or may be, appropriate to men as such, are the knowledge and power of the Father, and not of the Son; though the Son is appointed a medium, through which they are to be displayed.

But, I need not enlarge. My principal object was only to show you, that the absurdity (and I do admit it to be absurd) of considering two or more personal identities, &c. as going to constitute but one, is not predicable of my mind, if it be implied in the language I have used.

And now, Sir, whether I had a right to expect any fruit of my labour, in discussing the doctrine of the Trinity, except what should turn to my own confusion, I will not say. I will not dissemble, however, that in some things I am disappointed, while in others I am not. I am not disappointed, that my treatise has not mounted, among the many theological tracts of the day, as upon the wings of an eagle; but I am disappointed, that every bookstore in Boston, where liberality is so much the order of the day, should be resolutely and contemptuously shut against it; and that the Weekly Recorder, professedly open to all denominations, would not even admit the title page. I am not disappointed, that men should not declare themselves convinced by my reasoning without examining it; but I am disappointed, that so many are so prompt and eager to condemn the thing without seriously and candidly inquiring into it. And if I should declare to you my discouragement at being so repulsed by the public; would you marvel? You gently attempt to provoke me vigorously to labour for the truth; and I profess to have the willing mind; but my pen must be laid aside for the plough and the mattock, until the printer's bills are paid. And if not, why should I waste any more in filling his ware-houses with uncurrent sheets, which must be damned to ignominious neglect, because Unity is to be seen in one line and Trinity in the next? I think we need not hope for much progress in the investigation of truth and in the correction of error, until our party obliquities and sourness shall be a good deal mitigated; so that a Trinitarian shall not turn indignant from the sight of Unity; nor a Unitarian kindle into jealousy and scorn at a word so equivocal as that of Trinity.

You will excuse me, Sir, for not rejecting the latter term, since, though not sanctioned by Scripture use, it has been long appropriated, in the church, to distinguish the three, whose existence and offices are acknowledged by all. You judge me to have given up the essence of the doctrine, though not the name of Trinitarianism; and this I do not deny, if Trinity means three persons, or distinctions, in one God. But history has not yet informed me, that this is the only idea, that has ever been annexed to the term. And I should think it a question in Ecclesiastical history not yet settled, what exclusive sense belongs to Trinity, as a term of distinction, long used in the christian church. But, at any rate, let substance and not shadow, truths and not empty names, be the grand subjects of inquiry.

J. FIELD.

Charlemont, May 10, 1822.

We cheerfully give publicity to the above letter from the author of a Treatise, which was reviewed in our first number of the current year. As it was then our wish to give a fair and true account of the author's scheme on the subject of the Trinity; we are happy now to allow him the opportunity of explaining himself a part of it, of which he thinks we have mistaken the meaning, and to give our readers also the advantage of having his own exposition of his views.

We are sorry to learn, that he finds so little encouragement to pursue his inquiries, and to publish the result of them; and that he has so much reason to complain of the want of interest in the community, and of liberality in our booksellers. We are indeed not a little surprised and mortified, that it can be said, that every bookstore in Boston is 'resolutely and contemptuously shut against his book.' We are confident that the writer must have been misinformed on the subject. That 'even its title-page 'should be refused a place in the Recorder,'—and that it should not be permitted to stand on the shelves of bookstores of a certain description, devoted to the interests and views of a sect, does not surprise us. But although the writer professes to be a Trinitarian, and his book purports to be a Trinitarian publication, we are confident, that it will meet with very different treatment at any Unitarian bookstore, to which it shall be offered.

It is a subject of some regret, that the respected writer should allow himself to express so strong feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction at the neglect of his book by the public. He ought to have known, and we think he has put himself in the way to learn, enough of the spirit of orthodoxy, not to be surprised at a rejection of his work without examination. Should

he experience in his person no part of that hostility, which has been excited against his opinions, it is more than the course of things for a few years past would warrant him to expect. In Unitarians we trust he will meet with a different spirit. Though not able to fall in wholly with his opinions, they will listen to them with attention; will do justice to the arguments by which he supports them, and honour the spirit of free and liberal inquiry, which he brings into the discussion.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

I HAVE been strongly interested in the perusal of a sermon by the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, delivered at the annual meeting of the society for propagating the gospel among the Indians and others in North America. It contains some views on the importance of effort in the cause of domestic missions, which deserve to be generally made known and attentively considered, and which I am persuaded will be acceptable to the readers of the *Christian Disciple*.

The subject is introduced with an inquiry into the causes which operate against the success of the preaching of the gospel to heathen nations. The great impediment is stated, in the words of the Abbé Dubois, to be, the unchristian character of most of those christians who visit pagan countries. 'The conduct of those, who, though born in christian countries, are now spread all over India, is often so unworthy of their faith, as to increase the prejudice and dislike which the natives entertain for every foreign religion, and, above all others, for christianity.' And this great difficulty, 'this great obstruction to the advancement of our religion, meets us in every direction in which we would extend its knowledge and its power.'

How is this impediment to be removed? The preacher answers, by extending the influence of our religion in countries already christian, and providing that our brethren who carry the christian name with them to unbelieving lands, shall no longer exhibit such false specimens of the christian character. In order to effect these desirable ends, he insists, among other means, on the importance of patronage to domestic missionary societies. It is this passage to which I have particularly referred.

'Is it necessary to state the fact, that there are parts of our country in almost equal moral darkness, as are many parts of the pagan world to which we are sending missionaries? The Sab-

bath, in these places, is scarcely distinguished even as a day of rest from ordinary labour; public worship is almost unknown; and children are growing up without any of the knowledge, or the discipline of a school; and consequently, without ability to read the bible, even if it should be given to them. Is it not then our duty first to provide for our own; and then, as we are able, for others? Is moral desolation, that is near to us, a smaller evil in our sight, than that which is distant? Have *they* a smaller claim upon our charity, and upon our exertions to bring them into the christian church, who, in our very neighbourhood, have no other knowledge of Christ, but of his name, than have the inhabitants of Africa, and of the Indies? Let it not be replied, that zeal for foreign missions does not diminish our interest in the cause of elevating the religious and moral character of christendom; that it does not divert from this course any of the streams of charity, nor appropriate labours that are wanted for moral culture at home. I am not pleading against zeal for the conversion of the heathen. No. Would to God that they were all persuaded to be followers of his Son! But let an appeal be patiently heard, for sympathy in the condition of those of our countrymen, who would be taught, but have not the means of obtaining teachers; who ask for our assistance in establishing among them the institutions of the gospel, and schools for the education of their children; and whose loud, and reiterated calls are scarcely regarded. Here is a broad field for the toil of christian duty, in which a succession even of divinely commissioned apostles would find full employment. And great would be the change produced in the character of society among us, were these dark places to be enlightened by our religion; were these barren places to be broken up, and sowed with the seed of the word of God. Thus might something, and perhaps much be done, to efface the stigma that is affixed, in the view of heathens, upon the christian character. And who, that is solicitous for the universal diffusion of our religion, can overlook, or lightly esteem, the paramount claims of associations for the accomplishment of these objects, upon his warmest regard, his most enlarged bounty, and his earnest efforts for their extension and their success?

‘We have been accustomed to hear so much of the privileges that are possessed in our happy country, in our constitutional provision for the education of children, and for the maintenance of religious institutions; so long and so often has it been our boast, that wherever there is a settlement formed, there, while yet our citizens have scarce provided for them-

selves a habitation, a school has been established, a church has been gathered, and the ordinances of our religion have been administered ; so long have we exulted in the sentiment, that there is no American who cannot read, and write, and provide for himself in the world ; that our mental vision is obscured in the mist of our national vanity. Our sensibility is deadened to the privations and the ignorance of many thousands, on whom, in their poverty, neither constitutional provisions nor laws can exert any influence for their improvement. We are as indifferent, as inert in the cause of reforming popular ignorance and popular vice among ourselves, and of extending to those who have them not, the benefits of christian institutions, as if the number demanding this charity was too inconsiderable for our notice. That we are ourselves greatly distinguished by the means we possess of religion and of education, is true ; and most devoutly should we bless God for them. But let us awake to the consideration that much, very much is to be done, if we would that privileges, any thing like our own, should be possessed and enjoyed through our country. If we would indulge the boast, that every hamlet has its school, its church, and its ministry, let us first look into our plantations and hamlets, and inquire in how many of them there is no provision, either for the instruction of children, or the social worship of God. And if the inquiry should humble us, let it also stimulate us to greater exertion for their rescue from the dangers that threaten them. The united charities of all our associations for the diffusion of the knowledge of Christ, would hardly,—I believe would not,—meet the just demands upon us for missionary efforts at home.

‘And, let me say one word in behalf of the poor, oppressed, and greatly injured aborigines of our country, towards whom a course of policy and conduct was so long indulged, the tendency of which was to make them as hostile to our religion, as to our countrymen ; to drive them as effectually from our religion, as we have expelled them from our settlements. A tremendous account is to be rendered to God, of the injustice and cruelty with which the original owners of our soil, and their descendants, have been treated by those who have taken possession of it. Great as has been the desolation that we have extended among them by war, still greater has been that which has resulted from the vices, that were unknown among them, till they were instructed in them by those who were called Christians. And shall the remnants that still exist of the extensive tribes that once inhabited, and owned our country, be permitted to melt away, as dew before the sun ; or rather, I would say, be permitted to perish miserably in ignorance, unpitied, and without any

earnest effort to bless them, by raising them from the debasement and wretchedness into which they have fallen? The time is favourable to a union of exertions in this interesting enterprise; and God will require it of us, that we are faithful to the means and opportunities which we have of prosecuting it.

‘Societies for domestic missions have the peculiar claim upon christians, that their design is the accomplishment of the very object for which Jesus prayed, as above all others, the means of securing the universal triumph of his religion; and of obviating the very difficulty, of all others the greatest, in the way to the attainment of this object. The Society, whose anniversary we now celebrate, looks to the religious and moral condition of our country; and would awaken in every heart that feels it not, a christian zeal in the cause of bringing all among us to the knowledge, faith, and obedience of Christ. We would extend the knowledge and comforts of our religion to our native Indians. We would do what we can in the great cause of making our country in reality, what it is nominally, Christian. There is less indeed, much less in this design, to gratify some of the strongest passions of our nature, than in the enterprise of converting hundreds of millions from the superstition, and vice, and misery of heathenism. But, considering the state of christendom, or at least, of a great part of our own country, is there, on the whole, less that requires and promises to repay our first care, our first exertions, and our most liberal pecuniary offerings? The reproach which heathens cast upon us, judging of Christianity from what they too often see, is just. And with as much justice, could they see more of us,—could they see how little interest is excited in the cause of the conversion of those among ourselves, who know not God, and of the reformation of those who know, but live without him in the world;—with as much justice, could they see how our domestic missionary societies are patronized, and how their anniversaries are attended, might they taunt us with the proverbs, “physician, heal thyself!” “first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou mayest see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” Yes, justly might they reproach us, that we are so cold, so indolent, and so sparing in this first claim upon our zeal, and labour, and expenditure in the cause of our religion.’

It is not my intention to enlarge upon this topic, but simply to present it to the serious consideration of all who feel for the interests of religion. There is an apathy most truly astonishing on this subject, from which it is exceedingly desirable that the christian public should be roused. There is perhaps no public object of an importance by any means equal, which is so coldly

advocated and so poorly patronized. There are those who devote to it their thoughts and exertions, but they are miserably encouraged and aided by the community. This is easily seen by looking at any statement of the contributions which are made for various purposes of religious benevolence. I do not possess the means of making a detailed statement on this point, nor is it necessary. The few items I can produce will sufficiently prove, that there is a less general desire to promote the spread of the gospel amongst the destitute of our own land, than to accomplish either of the other designs of christian charity.

DOMESTIC PURPOSES.

Receipts of the *Massachusetts Domestic Missionary Society* from Feb. 1, to May 10, \$112.45 : making about \$450 a year.

The annual contributions to the *Evangelical Missionary Society of Massachusetts*, average not more than \$500.

In the month of April, the *Connecticut Education Society* received \$92. = about 1,100 a year.

The *American Education Society*, \$953. = about 11,500 a year.

The contributions to the *Society for propagating the Gospel amongst the Indians, &c.* for 1821, were \$757. The permanent fund, \$23,356.

FOREIGN PURPOSES.

During April, the *United Foreign Missionary Society (Conn.)* received \$818.93. = about \$9,800.

During the last year the receipts of the *Massachusetts Missionary Society*, were \$1,656.

From April 18 to May 14, the *American Board for Foreign Missions* received \$3,322.53, besides about \$500 in boxes of clothing. Contributions to this Board amount to not far from \$60,000 annually.*

What a poor place is found for home missions amidst all this splendid and bountiful expense! Is it not melancholy that christian compassion has so little thought for those who are suffering in spiritual want in our own growing land, and makes no more effort to keep off from our new settlements and old parishes the shadows of irreligion and heathenism! When we think

* In connexion with this is to be remembered that 12,000 copies of the *Missionary Herald* are distributed. We do not know how many are subscribed and paid for; but supposing it to be two thirds of the whole number, we here have \$12,000 expended for foreign missions to be added to the above amount.

of the contrasts of zeal and money exhibited in the preceding statements, is not every one reminded of our Lord's caution—*These ought ye to have done, but not to leave the others undone.* Is there not a criminal sleepiness in this matter? Especially, let me ask, is there not an imperious call upon those, who doubt the duty and deny the expediency of attempting the conversion of the distant heathen world, and who withhold their aid from that work on the plea that there is much to be done at home—to apply themselves earnestly to these domestic exertions? Is not indifference and neglect in them doubly inexcusable and shameful? Are they not bound to quicken their zeal and increase their efforts, lest they be convicted of a gross and disgraceful inconsistency?

My only object at present is to throw out a few hints on a subject of great and pressing interest, to whose claims we are too insensible. I hope that others will be found to pursue it, and urge it with all the force and eloquence which it deserves.

WELL DOING THE BEST ARGUMENT AGAINST EVIL SPEAKING.

It is a fault finding world in which we live, and it must be allowed that there is a great deal of fault to be found. That there is ample room for censure and condemnation, is not, however, an excuse for censoriousness, and harsh and hasty judgment. It is important that vice should be discountenanced and scourged by the expression of both private and public opinion, that error should be openly noticed, that folly should meet with the ridicule which it deserves, that the weak and the wicked should, in the proper manner, and at the proper time, be held up for chastisement and scorn—but this is no reason why the spirit of detraction should be tolerated, or why we should not complain when we are misrepresented and unjustly reviled.

But complaining will only show our sense of the injury, without bringing us redress; it will tell of our suffering, but will not prove it unmerited, nor command a cure. Neither can we always justify ourselves by words, for we shall often lack the opportunity, and sometimes even the power. There is one method left, however, which is at all times in our power, which should invariably be adopted, and which cannot fail of success—we may justify ourselves by our actions. Explain our motives and our principles as we may, there are a great many people who will not, and a great many who cannot understand them, a great many who make it their pleasure, and a great many who

think it their duty, to put such a construction on them as we will not allow, and infer such consequences from them as never existed. It is a consolation then to know that there is a sovereign efficacy in virtue and good conduct which will either bring such people to their senses, or at any rate, place us above the reach of their ignorance or ill will.

On this subject, the words of St. Peter in the second chapter of his first epistle, are strikingly explicit and forcible. *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* In the early ages of christianity, they, who were, by the force of education, habit and prejudice, strongly attached to the religion of their fathers, together with those who were, from interest, determined at all events to support it, accused the followers of Jesus of every crime and enormity for which the novelty of their faith could afford the least colour of a pretext, or which malice and ingenuity could suggest. They spoke against them, as we learn from this same chapter, 'as evil doers,' and particularly as being animated by a seditious, rebellious spirit, and a design to overthrow or undermine the constituted authorities of the empire. St. Peter, therefore, earnestly beseeches them to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles; so that whereas they spoke against them as evil doers, they might, by their good works which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation—meaning by these words, that the heathens would be so affected by the meekness, forbearance and fortitude with which the christians would endure abuse and persecution, that many would become convinced of the truth which they saw so nobly supported, and would embrace a religion so effectually recommended by the conduct of its votaries. And in order to repel the particular charge of seditious intentions, he commands them to submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. *For so is the will of God,* he continues, *that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* As if he had said—It is the immutable will of God, it is the eternal course and constitution of things, that uprightness, truth and virtue, shall at length prevail. Let ignorance and folly misapprehend and deride, let prejudice and malice and detraction reiterate their calumnies, let licentiousness scoff, let bigotry persecute, and let fanaticism rave; WELL DOING is the universal rhetoric, the divine, irresistible eloquence, the steady, invincible, unanswerable argument, which, sooner or later, will silence them

all. Only persevere, therefore, in a course of virtuous conduct, only be innocent when you are accused of being criminal, only *do well* when you are accused of doing ill, only obey the civil magistrate in all things lawful, when you are accused of despising and resisting his authority, and every clamour will die away—you will be first respected, then tolerated, and then believed.—What was the event? The most ample success. The scene was reversed. The small stone swelled into a mountain; the mustard-seed became a tree. The humble sect which had been wronged, opposed and persecuted, gathered strength upon strength, and grew, and rose up, and burst its fetters, and scattered abroad the kindled faggots, and snapt asunder the iron rod of tyranny. It was not long, before christianity came forth from the caves of the forest and the dwellings of the dead, where she had been fearfully offering her prayers, and performing her rites, by the dim ray of a solitary lamp, and marched into the lighted temples which had been purified for her reception—(alas, for her that they were not more thoroughly purified!) It was not long, before the christian name was changed from a byeword of obloquy to a title of honour. It was not long, before the christian religion became the religion of the empire; before there was a christian Cæsar upon the throne of the world.

Between those times and these, circumstances have created a most important difference; and yet there are few, even now, if any, who are so far exempted from the common lot, as not to be exposed, in a greater or less degree, to misconception and slander. In such cases, the advice of the apostle is always good advice—the very best—and they who take it will never be disappointed in its efficacy.

The standard of propriety and feeling established by society is not, at all times, and in every situation, that which is sanctioned by the heart; and the rule of action which is followed by the world does not always coincide with that prescribed by heaven. If a man is determined to remain at peace with his Maker and himself, he must sometimes be at war with those who are about him. There are laws to which he is required to conform, there are idols before which he is commanded to bow himself down, upon pain of incurring the displeasure and proscription of those who have forgotten their allegiance to the Lord of Hosts. If he persists in resisting these unauthorized demands, the threatened vengeance is taken. He is stigmatized with those epithets of opprobrium which can be pressed into any service, and which are the most appropriately ranked in that which is the vilest. He is called a coward perhaps, because he fears to offend the author of his being, and dares to endure the conse-

quences of his loyalty. He is called a fool, because he refuses to buy worldly advantage or pleasure at the expense of his conscience and his duty. He is pointed at as pitiful and spiritless, because he shrinks from extravagance and debauchery; because he would rather be reasonable than fashionable, when he cannot be both; because he would rather be offensive to his companions than abhorrent to himself, when it is necessary that he must be the one or the other; because he thinks, that, as his Creator has been pleased to make him a man and a rational being, he should neither manifest his gratitude, nor his rationality, no, nor his spirit, by degrading himself into a brute. The ignorance which so grossly mistakes the true nobility of character, and the true honour of a man, as to bestow, in this manner, the terms of reproach where they are the least deserved, will soon however be put to silence by a steady adherence to those principles of conduct which first excited its abuse. Let it be once proved, proved by a uniform tenor of *well doing*, that the same convictions which prompted him to resist the call of perverted opinion, and refuse compliance with the solicitations of unlawful pleasure, would also command him to resist every thing that was evil, and always to refuse compliance where compliance would be shame—that he was sincere in the reasons which he gave for his singularity, because his conduct was in all its parts consistent—that there was a real, and not a mock majesty, in his sentiments, because the strongest passions of his nature were awed in their presence, and the most powerful temptations of the world were made to fall down before them—that though he would not spend an hour in riot, he would devote his days to the pursuit of high and worthy objects, to the service of humanity, and the cause of virtue—that though he carefully preserved his life when duty did not order, and religion did not suffer him to hazard it, he as fearlessly exposed it when they did—let this be proved, I say, and the work is done. The natural good feelings of mankind, though long restrained by prejudice and outcry, will at length come over to his side. Those who still remain prepossessed and inveterate will be forced into quietness from the want of an audience; for all will refuse to give ear to their accusations, who are convinced, in these ways, of their injustice. Men will often be bold enough to applaud, when these are not bold enough to follow; and magnanimous enough to admire a courage and energy so manifestly superior to their own.

There is another way in which the false judgment of others is apt to do us wrong. We are not only reproached and abused for refusing to conform our conduct to perverted notions and bad customs—that may be borne—but we are often exposed to be so

entirely misinterpreted, as to be charged with real failings, with which, in truth, our character holds not communion—and this is very hard to be borne. In the first case, they only transform, by a wretched criterion, our virtues into defects; in the second, they attribute defects to us which are foreign to our nature. It is no wonder, indeed, that misapprehensions should arise, when they often flow, so naturally, both from a want of penetration in others, and a want of prudence in ourselves; but still we cannot but feel greatly hurt by imputations so serious, though they may be for the most part unintended. The same redress however, which has already been mentioned, lies open here. To attempt our self-justification by words would sometimes be of more harm to us than service; because the liberty which we had taken in supposing the existence of injustice might be resented, and then, too, the motive might be suspected which urged us to speak in our own defence. But let our actions speak for us. Let us prove by marks, whose authenticity cannot be doubted, that we have been mistaken and wronged, and we shall find that the impressions which had been so unfortunately made will be gradually worn away. If we have been thought to be mean, to be vain, to be haughty, to be selfish, let us unaffectedly show, in instance after instance, our generosity, our humility, and our disinterestedness, and our character will be vindicated, and the causes of its misapprehension explained—and thus one party will be justified without suspicion, and the other convinced without offence.

We have said that the ignorance which judges falsely of our conduct may be silenced by our continuing to act well. We will now proceed to show that the ignorance or injustice which abuses our sentiments and opinions, may be silenced in the same way.

They who think themselves to be in the right, think, of course, that all who differ from them are in the wrong. And they who are afraid that the authority of their own opinions is declining, are naturally predisposed to think evil, and speak evil, of any which may oppose them. Harsh and hasty conclusions are in this manner formed, asserted, and proclaimed, and experience alone will show whether they are authorized, or unwarrantable. The importance of religion, its power over the mind and heart, its intimate connexion with the happiness and hopes and ends of our being, make it in a peculiar manner a subject of jealousy between those who differ upon any point which it embraces, or seems to embrace. It appears to be a pity that the very causes which render religion so infinitely valuable, should in this way tend to diminish its influence—but so it is—and they who

are sensible of its value, and are yet unable to distinguish between what is essential and what is not, are very apt to lose a great portion of the first by their vain contentions about the last. It is an inevitable consequence of this ignorant zeal and blind anxiety, that all doctrines which are new, or but partially known, should wear an aspect of unreal terror in the eyes of him whose views of religion are tutored and confined, who sees it only as he has been taught to see it, and whose knowledge of it has been gathered chiefly from the catechism which he repeated at school, and the doctrinal sermons of his own clergyman. Such an one will endeavour to communicate his panic to the world, and make it believe that the sentiments, by which his own prejudices have been attacked and frightened, are marching forward to wage a cruel war on the happiness, order and peace of society, to open the flood-gates of innovation and outrage, to break down every venerable and beloved institution human and divine, and ruthlessly and impiously to tear from their bosoms the hopes of men, and from God himself his honour and throne. For a time he may be attended to. The alarm will spread. Many will be terrified, and some will pretend to be hurt. Hard words will be used, and nick-names will be applied. There will be much bitterness, much contention, and something, mayhap, of persecution. But this cannot last long. When the terrible effects which have been predicted are seen not to take place, the prediction will be disregarded, the prophet will be silenced, and the accused will be left in peace. It was so with the first christians, when they were charged with immoral and seditious opinions and designs, and proved by their regular, harmless, submissive deportment that the charge was false. And it has been so, in later times, with many a christian sect which has been slandered, shunned and persecuted, till its innocence was made manifest, and the world repented of its injustice.

By no sect in christendom, perhaps, has this power of *well-doing* been proved so fully as by the quakers, for they had not only to contend against the prejudice created by novelty of doctrine, but that which was caused by an offensive, and certainly frivolous peculiarity, in dress, speech and manners. On their first appearance they were reviled, ridiculed, imprisoned, stripped, stoned, and their persecution is a dark blot in the history of New, as well as of Old-England. But their good conduct and peaceableness has produced an entire change in their favour, and they are now regarded as among our most respectable, useful and virtuous citizens. If a spice of the old feeling toward them yet remains, and their name is still something of a

bye-word, it is in consequence of the singularities already alluded to; it is because they insist on wearing broad-brimmed hats, saying *thou* and *thee* where other people would say *you*, and keeping themselves in a great measure distinct from the rest of society. Now these things are in themselves *parts of conduct*, and as they will always appear strange and somewhat ludicrous in the eyes of the many, will naturally be a drawback on the whole effect of their *general conduct*. This is an instance of their own misjudgment, and the blame of it is on themselves, for a smile cannot surely be severely condemned which is occasioned by seeing a man refuse to pull off his hat in company, with as much pertinacity as he would to part with his integrity, or a woman place as much stress on wearing a slate coloured bonnet as on clothing herself with the garments of meekness and modesty. All opposition however, and all ill-feeling, which was originally occasioned by the novelty of their doctrine, and its apprehended consequences, has completely died away, the general impression in their favour is very strong, and any exceptions which may exist are caused by their resistance to some of the common and long established and innocent customs and demands of society. Their case may be considered, therefore, as a remarkably strong one, and as showing, in a most striking manner, how powerful is the argument of well-doing.

It may be here stated, that it is not meant to assert that good conduct is a complete proof of sound doctrine. All experience would at once contradict such an assertion. The moral conduct of three differing sects may be equally correct, and yet it is evident that the doctrine of but one of these sects can be the true one. Thought is as various as feature, as voice, as form, as disposition, and it is fully as absurd to talk of uniformity in that as in those. Not only do sects divide on generally known, and frequently defined points, but the individuals who compose any one of these sects, no matter which, differ from each other on many subjects of perhaps equal importance, though less commonly brought forward. It is vain therefore to say even that any one sect possesses the entire truth, when it is notorious that the component parts of every one are more or less at variance. No argument can prove the existence of what has never taken place, and probably never will. All that can be expected, and all that can be reasonably desired, from the argument of well-doing in connexion with religious opinions is, that it should contradict any misrepresentation of their tendency, do away bad impressions, conquer all feelings of mistrust, suspicion and fear, produce confidence and good neighbourhood, and place any sect on fair and equal ground with its adversaries.

When this ground is obtained, let it dispute, exhort, and argue, as it can, and the world will be sure to hear it, and hear it favourably. If it has reason and scripture on its side it will grow and prevail. Local causes may for a time impede its progress, but it must increase; and, if its views are eminently rational and scriptural, it must ultimately take the lead, or there is no force in truth.

Although, therefore, well doing will not prove that nonsense is sense, and imagination is reality, it will do what is much better; it will prove that the heart is right, and that the intentions are laudable. No aphorism is more universally acknowledged, and acted upon, in the world, than that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Let disputants and preachers of a certain class write and talk as they please about good works, they lie at the foundation, at the very foundation, of all that is beloved and respected and regarded and confided in. Is proof demanded? I can bring it to the very point in question. I say that the opprobrium of bad morals is the worst and the most alarming which can possibly be cast on any denomination, and that all denominations unequivocally manifest that the praise of virtue is the best which can be bestowed or desired. What manner is that of describing any doctrine which is best calculated to inspire dislike and dread? Surely it would be to say that the doctrine produced, in those who professed it, a looseness of behaviour, and a disregard of the divine laws; to say, in short, that its tendency was immoral. And till such a character could be shown to be undeserved, the aversion produced would be extreme and unconquerable. On the other hand, let it be well known that the behaviour of a particular sect is blameless, and its morals remarkably pure, and what would be the answer of a plain, unfettered man to one who should dissuade him from hearing, or having any intercourse with, its members. 'Their conduct is quite as good as our own, and, it may be, better. Their opinions cannot be so terrible, while their actions are so commendable. I will certainly hear with patience and candour what they have to say.' And the answer would be just and manly. Every person of observation must see that this is the universal course; and this course shows so plainly the fundamental importance of conduct, that it is blindness to question it.

We Unitarians have had quite our share of obloquy, reproach, and persecution—in times past, of persecution to the death, but those times are gone, and we do not wish to recall, or to think of them. We have been, and we still are accused, of dishonouring God, of robbing the Saviour of his glory, and of leading men astray, by deceitful doctrines, into the paths of error

and darkness. These are sweeping and indefinite charges, but, as far as they can be made out, we hesitate not to say that our lives, that our *well-doing*, have answered them all. We desire not to lay claim to any extraordinary holiness, we dare not deny our share of frailty, unworthiness and sin, but we can boldly affirm that accusations of this nature have as little application to us as to any community of christians whatever, and to repel them, we can appeal, with as much confidence as any, to our conduct, and to heaven. Do we dishonour thee, O God, can we dishonour thee, by listening with veneration to thy word, by keeping thy commandments, by obeying thy laws, by walking in thy ways, by receiving thy gifts with gratitude, by suffering thy chastisements with resignation, and by knowing no comparison between thy glorious name, and any other name, in heaven or in earth!—Do we rob the Saviour of his glory, by hailing him, with joy and thankfulness, as the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world; by laying his precepts to our hearts, and by looking continually to that bright and eternal world which he has revealed, and to which he has ascended? If, indeed, to manifest the influence of his doctrines and laws on our tempers and lives be to rob him of his glory, then we know not what glory to give, or what service to render. And how can they be said to lead men into dangerous error, who are constantly inculcating on them sentiments like these, who beseech them, as they love their own souls, to raise their thoughts and views from the objects and pursuits of sense and time, and fix them on higher and worthier things, and on another and an endless world, who exhort them, as they love and fear God, to accept his offers, and perform his requirements, to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before him? As to our doctrines, let them be examined. They are plain, and intelligible, and worthy of God. We fear not the scrutiny; we invite it. In the mean time, let us never forget, let us continually impress on ourselves, and on each other, the exceeding value of unexceptionable conduct, of purity of intention, and holiness of life. Virtue, in a religious community, as in an individual, is indispensable, and all-powerful. It is an argument which is universally felt and understood, and one which will be finally victorious. We trust that it is an argument which we shall always be able to offer. If any views of religion are calculated to furnish it, they are our own. They are every thing which is animating, ennobling, and purifying, and will, we doubt not, continue to produce their natural fruits of good feeling and virtue, while there is any feeling in the heart, or virtue in the world.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER ON CANDOUR. BY ROBERT ROBINSON.

— A FRIEND of yours, a man of infinite complaisance to the ladies, sat down one day to study the opinions of the primitive fathers on Baptism; after others, he began Tertullian's book on that subject. That book, you know, is entitled *Quinctus Septimius Florens Tertullian, Presbyter of Carthage, on Baptism, against Quintilla*. Imagining that the African father was as great an admirer of the ladies as himself, he did not doubt but he should be much edified by Tertullian's addressing Quintilla on baptism. Wisdom, gravity and politeness, said he to himself, are united here, to be sure. But how would you have smiled had you seen his panic, when he discovered in the fifth line of the first chapter that Tertullian falls to abusing her, calling her a heretic, a viper, a serpent, an asp, a most monstrous creature, whose doctrine was of the most poisonous kind. Hah! cried he, is this an African tête-à-tête! Is this your spirit, Tertullian! If you are a gentleman, where's your breeding? If a christian, where's your meekness? If a philosopher, where's your good sense? Well, well, said he (closing the huge book) perhaps Quintilla and you may be well met. E'en scold it out. I'll go seek a gentler tutor.

The question here is not whether your friend's conclusion from the premises was quite logical; whether asperity and argument may not be sometimes united; but whether passionate writers do not generally produce similar effects on their readers. People are naturally prepossessed in favour of a sufferer; they naturally become prejudiced against such a violent pleader; they cannot help saying, What's the matter? If your accounts be right, why so prodigiously agitated? You surely design to impose on us, and would deter us from detecting you. You are certainly conscious of having maintained a defenceless cause, and you are making effrontery supply the place of argument; thus giving us brass instead of gold.

People are never safe with antagonists of this fierce temper; they are formidable beyond expression in some places. Hence that smart reply of Dr. De Launoi at Paris. The Dr. had made free to censure that angel of the schools, Thomas Aquinas. The Dominicans were exasperated at this, and apologized for their angelical doctor. One day a friend said to De Launoi, 'You

have disgusted all the Dominicans, they will all draw their pens against you.' Said he, with a malicious air, '*I dread their pen-knives more than I do their pens.*'

You lament, (and indeed who can help lamenting?) the bad spirit of too many religious controversies. Religion is a sacred thing, and meekness is a part of it; whence then is it, that prejudice and passion in some, fire and flame in others, appear in these disputes? The gospel is nothing of all this; the gospel needs nothing of all this; all this disgraces the gospel; for which reason perhaps our Saviour forbid the devils to publish his mission.

The fierce disputes of christians have always scandalized the good cause, and will always continue to do so, till mildness and moderation succeed violence; and then christianity will reassume her primitive habit, and with that, her native prevalence.

There is in the life of archbishop Tillotson a fine example of the deportment here pleaded for. While Dr. Tillotson was dean of Canterbury, he preached at Whitehall, before his majesty Charles the second, a sermon in which were these words. 'I cannot think, till I be better informed (which I am always ready to be) that any pretence of conscience warrants any man that is not extraordinarily commissioned, as the apostles and first publishers of the gospel were, and cannot justify that commission by miracles, as they did, to affront the established religion of a nation, although it be false, and openly draw men off from the profession of it, in contempt of the magistrate and the laws. All that persons of a different religion can in such case reasonably pretend to, is to enjoy the private liberty and exercise of their own consciences and religion, for which they ought to be very thankful,' &c. &c. When the dean had ended his sermon, said a certain nobleman to the King, who had been asleep most part of the time, '*Tis pity your majesty slept, for we have had the rarest piece of Hobbism that ever you heard in your life.* Ods fish, replied the king, *he shall print it then.* The dean was accordingly ordered to print it. He did so, and as soon as it came from the press, sent one, (as he usually did) to his friend, the Rev. Mr. John Howe. Mr. Howe (you know) had been ejected for nonconformity, and was at that time pastor of a congregation in London. On reading the dean's sermon, he was exceedingly troubled at the above cited passage, and drew up a long expository letter on the subject. He signified 'how much he was grieved, that in a sermon against popery he should plead the popish cause against all the reformers. He insisted upon it, that we had incontestable evidences of the miracles wrought by the apostles, and that we are bound to believe them, and take reli-

gion to be established by them, without any farther expectations. What, (said he) must the christian religion be repealed, every time a wicked governor thinks fit to establish a new religion? Must no one stand up for the true religion till he can work a miracle?' &c. Mr. Howe carried the letter himself, and delivered it into the dean's own hand, who, thinking they should be less interrupted in the country, proposed Mr. Howe's dining with him at Sutton-court, the seat of the Lady Falconbridge. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Howe read over the letter to the dean, and enlarged on its contents, as they were travelling along together in his chariot. The dean, at length convinced of his mistake, fell a weeping freely, and said that this was the most unhappy thing that had of a long time befallen him. *I see* (says he) *what I have offered is not to be maintained.* Let bigots censure the good archbishop Tillotson's friendship and tenderness to dissenters; let them exclaim at his want of zeal; exclusive of the rest of his conduct, the single example above recited, will make you cry out with Bishop Burnet, *His conduct needs no apology, for it is above it.* Farewell.

FUNERAL ANTHEM.

FROM MILMAN'S 'MARTYR OF ANTIOCH.'

Brother, thou art gone before us, and thy saintly soul is flown
Where tears are wiped from every eye, and sorrow is unknown;
From the burthen of the flesh, and from care and fear released,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

The toilsome way thou'st travelled o'er, and borne the heavy load,
But Christ hath taught thy languid feet to reach his blest abode.
Thou'rt sleeping now, like Lazarus upon his father's breast,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Sin can never taint thee now, nor doubt thy faith assail,
Nor thy meek trust in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, fail. [best,
And there thou'rt sure to meet the good, whom on earth thou lovedst
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

'Earth to earth,' and 'dust to dust,' the solemn priest hath said,
So we lay the turf above thee now, and we seal thy narrow bed;
But thy spirit, brother, soars away among the faithful blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

And when the Lord shall summon us, whom thou hast left behind,
May we, untainted by the world, as sure a welcome find;
May each, like thee, depart in peace, to be a glorious guest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

ON PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

‘You are apprized, I presume, of the extraordinary fact that after the prayer meeting, holden by ministers last [Election] week, in Park-street, a motion was made by Rev. Mr. Pond, and the vote carried, to set apart for prayer in their several churches, the hour from 8 to 9 o’clock every Saturday evening, that it may please God to visit Boston and the University at Cambridge with the out-pourings of his spirit. It is a good thing to pray for one another, and I know not but the motion and the vote proceeded from the purest motives. But there is something in this attempt to carry the unhallowed feelings of controversy to the Throne of Grace, which shocks me. It cannot, if executed, but have an unhappy influence on churches and will inspire them, I fear, with a spirit of cursing rather than of prayer.’—*Christian Register*.

The propriety and duty of praying for one another will not, of course, be called in question by any, who believe in the Scriptures, or in the efficacy of prayer in general. There are those, whom we cannot love or esteem, and there are those, whom we ought not to aid or countenance; but there are none for whom we may not and ought not to pray. We may be unable to render our fellow-creatures any other assistance, or they may be unable, or perhaps unwilling, to receive it; but we can at least pray for them. And to suppose that such intercessions, when rightly made, will have no avail, seems to us like making the Deity as senseless an object of invocation as the idols of the heathen.

Much however depends upon the manner and spirit in which this duty is performed. Our prayers for one another in order to be acceptable, must be made in *charity*. We are required to pray for those who differ from us in opinion, and even for our personal enemies; but better would it be for us not to pray for them at all, unless we can pray for them in charity. There is a glaring inconsistency in affecting to pray for men, when in our hearts we feel nothing but bitterness and jealousy towards them. It is gross hypocrisy to pray for men, when we are doing every thing in our power to injure and wrong them. Unless we can divest ourselves of uncharitable feelings towards those for whom we would pray, and unless we can appeal to our general conduct to prove that we have done this—to pray for them would be mockery. (Nay worse; it would be a vain and impious attempt to practise upon the Searcher of hearts

that same system of duplicity, which is so frequently and so successfully practised upon the world.) If we cannot divest ourselves of uncharitable feelings towards those that differ from us, we had better not pray for them at all; for what communion can there be between prayer and uncharitableness?—‘what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?—what communion hath light with darkness?—what concord hath Christ with Belial?’

When we pray for one another we should also pray with *humility*. When our petitions have respect to the errors and sins of other people, we should remember that we likewise are compassed with infirmity; and we should pray as fallible men for fallible men, and as sinful men for sinful men. Oh, there is nothing in which pride and self-righteousness appear so inexcusable—so awfully presumptuous—so much like insanity—as in prayer. To see a man sharing with his fellow-creatures a common frailty of nature—full of feelings and sentiments any thing but amiable—guilty in many respects and imperfect in all—with nothing to hope but from the mercy of God—to see such a man officious to pray for others in every point his equals, except perhaps in self-righteousness and spiritual pride—praying for them too in a tone of superiority if not of insult, as if he were safe, and as if they were apostates and reprobates—there is something in this which, if it were not shocking, would be sickening and disgusting. If we cannot pray for one another as we should wish to be prayed for in return, in a spirit of common and equal humility, we had better omit it altogether. If we must bring our arrogant and supercilious feelings even to our devotions, it is plain we come to them in a much fitter temper to blaspheme than to pray.

Again, when we pray for others, it should be with a single view to benefit *them*. It is well known how seldom, if ever, men act from motives purely disinterested; and it is very possible that we may be actuated, in part at least, even in our prayers, by other views and motives besides those which appear. It is very possible that while we affect to pray for others, we may be thinking chiefly of the influence it will have on ourselves, and on our standing in society. Like the Pharisees of old we may pray *to be seen of men*. We may pray that we may make ourselves of more consequence, and acquire the reputation of being uncommonly devout. Even when we pray for those who differ from us in religion, it may only be, or at least it may partly be, that we may gain more credit to our own side; and while we affect to intercede with exceeding earnestness for their conversion, we may all the time be insidiously endeavour-

ing, even *by the expressions in our prayers*, to heighten and inflame the popular prejudices against them. All this is very possible, and in some cases we cannot but think it the natural and probable supposition. And yet what a want of serious and vital religion it indicates, thus to cloak our selfish intriguing arts under the solemn pretence of prayer. Be it remembered, it was of such prayers that our Saviour said, 'THEREFORE SHALL YE RECEIVE THE GREATER DAMNATION.'

There are circumstances, indeed, under which our prayers for one another must become not only useless but highly injurious and justly censurable. It is when instead of praying *for* one another we do in fact pray *against* one another—one individual praying against another individual, or, what is still more frequent, one sect praying against another sect. This, we are aware, is commonly done under a pretence of praying for their conversion, or for their deliverance from some fearful delusion; which seems at first sight but a reasonable and even a benevolent object. But we should be careful how far we are carried away by this plausible idea. We know that men were equally sincere in those days, when they would not only pray for those whom they chose to consider as deluded, but would even in the excess of their kindness burn them at the stake—for the good of their souls. If we are so anxious about the condition of others, we should, indeed, pray for them, but not in such a manner, and under such circumstances as must make it evident that the effect will be to lessen their influence and injure their reputation in the community; for this is not to pray *for* men but *against* them, and we are not required to pray against men under any pretence whatever. We should not under a pretence of praying for a sect, join in concert to *pray it down*, by the influence which such prayers may have—not upon God—but upon public opinion. Nay, for a man possessing no peculiar means of information, and affording no peculiar proofs of piety and virtue, to introduce into his devotions, under any circumstances, expressions of contempt, or pity, or honour for men wiser and better than himself,—we should not perhaps regard it as certain evidence that he was not sincere, nor that his general intentions were not good—but we should infer that his humility and charity came at least in a questionable shape, and were in great danger of being entirely lost. The influence of such prayers upon the community and upon the general interests of religion must be still more detrimental.

Let one sect combine to pray against another, and the natural tendency of it must be to foster and influence those prejudices and dissensions in the christian church, which every real friend to

religion must wish to see subsiding. It must increase the proud and overbearing spirit of those who pray; it must provoke and indeed authorize, to a certain degree, a feeling of injury and resentment on the part of those who are prayed against; and what is still worse, it must afford to the irreligious part of the community a subject of derision and triumph. It is to no purpose for those who thus pray, to pretend that such are not their intentions. Such must be the effects, and they must be strangely ignorant of human nature and the present state of society, not to know it. If our very prayers are to breathe a hostile spirit—if the people cannot listen to our devotions without having their prejudices and their animosities inflamed—if men are taught to bring their jealousies and competitions even to the altar—if those who call themselves the ministers of peace, instead of combining to promote the common cause, make use of all the means in their power to destroy each others influence, and even make this the subject and the object of their public devotions—what can we expect, but that religion will either be disregarded or dreadfully perverted?

Besides; praying against one another in this way, seems to us to be an entire perversion of the object and end of prayer. We would hope, that amidst all our differences, there might still be one service at least, in which all christians might unite without having their feelings and convictions assailed or insulted. Let it be granted that all our dissensions must continue as they are, and that there must be on both sides just so much heat and bad feeling—we still would hope that the sanctity of prayer might never be profaned by sectarian jealousy and rancour. To take a service designed to humble men, and make it the occasion of self-exaltation—to take a service designed to bind men together in love, and to make it the means of fomenting discord and division—to take a service in which all our feelings, but those of devotion, should be subdued by an awful sense of the presence in which we stand, and to bring into it our earthly passions and interests and intriguing conspiracies—we know not how this may seem to other people, but to us, we confess, it seems like profanation.

We are aware that there may be many, who think us to be in a dangerous and perhaps, a fatal error, and who therefore may be perfectly sincere in praying for our conversion. But is it not enough that they deny us the christian name, that they refuse us all christian intercourse, that they make every effort in their power to lessen our influence and cause our piety and sincerity to be suspected? Not satisfied with this, must they go on to introduce this same exterminating spirit into their devotions, and insult and slander us before the mercy seat of God? We might have ex-

pected that they would spare us this last injury, not perhaps from any regard to us, but from a regard to the peace of society, the general interests of religion, and the hallowed nature of the service. Is it said that they must pray for our conversion in order to be consistent? We can only say, in reply, that there are some things worse even than inconsistency; and that it argues no good for their system, if, in order to preserve a consistency with it, they must sacrifice their moral principles or their good feelings. If, however, they must pray for our conversion, it would seem to be a subject fit only for their *private* devotions, and not to be prayed for formally, publicly, and in concert;—unless indeed, the real object was not so much to procure our conversion, as to prejudice the public against us; in which case it is true the latter is the proper and natural course to be pursued.

It is not that we despise the prayers of our brethren. We ask them to pray for us; but not in the spirit of wrath, not in the spirit of jealousy and pride. Heaven has no ear for such prayers, nor can they have any other effect on earth but to exasperate and inflame the bad passions of men. We ask for their prayers, but we do not wish them to affect to pray for us, merely that they may have an opportunity to tell the people that we are blind leaders of the blind. We are very conscious that we need the prayers of all good men; and we ask our brethren of every name to pray for us, as we will endeavour to pray for them in return—in that spirit of charity, and humility, and singleness of heart, without which all our prayers, whether for ourselves or for others, must be in vain, or worse than in vain.

REVIEW.

ARTICLE X.

The Christian and Civic Economy of large towns. By THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D. Minister of St. John's Church, Glasgow, Scotland. No. 2. *On the Influence of Locality in Towns.* pp. 27. New York: E. Bliss and E. White.

THIS distinguished preacher is already well known in this country as the author of several popular works. We have

had occasion to express our dissent from the arguments offered by him. Still, it cannot be denied that he is a preacher of great influence; an eloquent and powerful writer. In his own country he enjoys a high reputation as a theologian and philanthropist; and in this his works are eagerly and extensively read. His style is certainly diffuse and turgid. To use his own phrase, he often 'superficializes.' But this is not its worst quality. It is artificial, gaudy, elaborated, involved, and like ancient portraits, wraps up the subject in almost impenetrable decoration.

Dr. Chalmers is publishing in quarterly numbers a series of essays under the title quoted above. Four of these periodical pamphlets have been received in this country, and number two has been re-published in New York, with a recommendation, by the board of managers of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. This number is on the influence of locality in towns, and to this our observations will be limited.

Dr. Chalmers became first known to the public as a philanthropist, by an article in the forty-sixth number of the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he strongly reprobated gratuitous charities, and satisfactorily proved that the time and money expended in attempts to diminish pauperism, by alleviating it, tend directly to its increase. This article attracted the attention of enlightened philanthropists, and opened the eyes of thousands of zealous, but less thinking, benevolent persons in Great Britain and the United States. It showed the ability of the author to discuss a subject of such vast importance, which entitles his opinion and reasonings in his later publications to candid and serious consideration.

The object of the pamphlet before us is to recommend a new mode of benevolent exertion on behalf of the ignorant and poor. Dr. Chalmers is decidedly opposed to the whole machinery of charitable societies, and prefers individual and local exertions. He objects to such societies for prevention or relief of poverty, ignorance, and vice, that they expatiate at large, and over the face of the entire territory of a town. Great things have been attempted, rather than to do small things thoroughly and well. In Sabbath schools the teachers are indiscriminately stationed in all parts of a city, and the pupils are as indiscriminately drawn from all parts. Only a superficial action can then be maintained. 'There is,' he observes, 'an impatience on the part of many a raw and sanguine philanthropist, for doing something great; and, akin to this, there is an impatience for doing that great thing speedily.'

They spurn the condition of dwelling among littles; and unless there be a redeeming magnificence in the whole operation, of which they bear a part, there are some who could not be satisfied with a humble and detached allotment in the great vineyard of human usefulness.

The new scheme recommended by Dr. Chalmers is plausible, practicable, and simple. It is not a return to the old system of family charity, to the deserving applicants alone, whose condition is well known to the almoners. It does not wait to be supplicated, but seeks out and relieves the wretched. The plan is simply this; Let a small portion of a town, within certain defined geographical limits, be assigned to an individual. Let his place of benevolent exertion be within this locality, or as near as possible to its confines. Let him ascertain the physical, moral and religious wants of all the inhabitants within these limits. Let him restrain his attentions to these inhabitants, instituting a sabbath school in his district; encouraging the poor inhabitants to attend on church; circulating among them religious and moral publications, and tracts on domestic economy; promoting their temporal and spiritual welfare; inducing them to habits of cleanliness, sobriety, saving, and industry; acting as their counsellor, friend, overseer, and instructor.

Dr. Chalmers states that the system has succeeded in Scotland equal to the most sanguine expectations; that those who have tried it are charmed with the success of their labours, and think a general practice of the system would entirely change the state of things among the poor; that the visiting of the poor, by the rich, has a kindly influence; the readiest way of finding access to a man's heart being to go into his house. He states the advantages of this system to the *visitor*. Having a select and defined field of exertion, he feels himself more powerfully urged, than under the common arrangement, to undertake the renovation of the condition of the poorer classes; 'he will feel a kind of property in the families;' he finds that he makes progress in his benevolent enterprise, unlike those who are members of societies which operate on a large scale, skimming over the surface of society. He can go over the families with far less waste of time, and more fully and frequently repeat his attentions; 'he will turn the vicinity he has chosen into a home-walk of many charities, and be recognised as its moral benefactor.'

The advantages to the *visited* are great. A greater number will attend a sabbath school, for instance, if the instructions are given in their neighbourhood. The teacher's personal charac-

ter will have more weight among those who have become acquainted with him than it could have if he were more a stranger.

‘Under a local system, the teachers move towards the people. Under a general system, such of the people as are disposed to christianity, move towards them.’ ‘Under this system all the poor are brought forth: under the old only the more decent and regular families. This system pervades: the old only attracts. In one a great show is made of benevolent exertion, while vast numbers are overlooked.’

Dr. Chalmers cites an instance of the successful effects of this system, in the Salt Market Sabbath School Society. The district selected bore a population of 3624, about as large as one of the wards in this city. To cultivate this extent, four individuals appropriated to themselves each a portion of it. They opened Sunday schools; the number of scholars was 420, amounting to more than a ninth of the whole population.

‘These persons found that many a crowded haunt of this district was as completely untouched by the antecedent methods, as are the families in the wilds of Tartary—that hundreds of young, never at church, and without one religious observation to mark and to separate their sabbath from the other days of the week, have thus been brought within an atmosphere, which they now breathe for the first time in their existence—that, with a small collection of books attached to each humble seminary, there is a reading of the purest and most impressive character, in full circulation amongst the parents, and the children who belong to it; and, what is not the least important effect of all, that, by the frequent recurrence of week-day visitations, there is both a christian and a civilizing influence sent forth upon a whole neighbourhood, and a thousand nameless cordialities are constantly issuing out of the patriarchal relationship, which has thus been formed between a man of worth, and so many outcast and neglected families.’

The effect of these exertions is to raise and transform the poor, to enlighten the actual heathenism in which so many live in a christian community, to banish the practical infidelity of no inconsiderable part, it is feared, of the poorer classes. The district referred to underwent a rapid improvement; the dress and exterior of the poor, their manners, conversation, and general appearance and habits, were essentially benefited.

A gentleman, in Glasgow, assumed a district to himself, which he resolved to cultivate, on this system of local philanthropy. In rank and condition of the inhabitants it was greatly beneath the average of the town. The population was 996; which he, in the first instance, most thoroughly surveyed, and all of whom, he has now most thoroughly attached, and that, by his friendly and enlightened services. He established four sabbath schools.

He also instituted a saving bank, which takes in deposits only from those who live, or who work, within the bounds of this little territory. The bank may thus embrace a population of 1200, and in one year from its commencement, the whole sum deposited was \$1047. During this year sixty families of this small district opened their accounts with the bank, and received an impulse from it, on the side of economy, and foresight. Any general saving bank for the town at large, would not have called out one tenth of this sum. He is fast rescuing the obscure department in which he lives from all the miseries which attack to a crowded population of poor, by a most judicious benevolence.*

‘A single obscure street, with its divergent lanes and courts, may form the length and breadth of his enterprise; but far better that he, with such means and such associates as are within his reach, should do this thoroughly, than that, merging himself in some wider association, he should vainly attempt in the gross, that which never can be overtaken but in humble and laborious detail. Let him not think, that the region which lies beyond the limits of his chosen and peculiar territory, is to wither and be neglected, because his presence is not there to fertilize it. Let him not imagine himself to be the only philanthropist in the world. Let him do his part, trusting, that there are others around him who have zeal enough, and understanding enough, to do theirs. The example of a well-cultured portion of the territory, will do more to spread a beneficent influence over the whole, than is done by the misplaced energies of men who cannot be tempted to move, till some design of might and of magnificence is proposed to them. It is far better to cultivate one district well, though all the others be left untouched, than to superficialise over the whole city.’

Dr. Chalmers’ plan has thus been stated, and some reasons adduced entitling this system to a decided preference over the present mode of charitable exertion. It is not to be imagined that it originated with this gentleman. Time out of mind, individuals have delved into the abodes of ignorance and poverty, and in the sight of God and the unfortunate alone, have searched into and relieved, the misfortunes which afflict mankind. No doubt many of these unobtrusive philanthropists, perchance on account of their misgivings respecting the obligation of giving into the treasuries of societies, have the name of indifference or callousness to the claims of the poor. In this city, some years since, a similar plan was devised, combining individuality with

* This system has been commenced in the city of New York, by some individuals, and their success has been encouraging. The *Christian Herald*, from July to December, 1821, contains interesting accounts of the success of these labourers in the vineyard of christian philanthropy.

locality of exertion. The success which they met with in its commencement and progress, satisfied those engaged in it that the scheme was feasible, and could be rendered highly beneficial.

It may be useful to consider how far such a plan is applicable to the condition of society here. It is conceded on all hands, that the prevention of pauperism, vice and crime should receive a large portion of the philanthropic exertions which have been lavished to alleviate suffering, and support the idle and depraved. The principal means, under Providence, for the accomplishment of this desirable end, is the promotion of education, industry, temperance and economy. The ignorant, idle, dissolute, and wasteful are not few in the poorer ranks of our population. Our schools are numerous and accessible by all children, white and coloured, on arriving at the age of four years; we have a society for the employment of such female poor as are unable, through infirmity or misfortune, to seek work; there is a society for the suppression of intemperance; our Savings Bank, and Fuel Savings Institution, invite the poor to preserve, in security, their resources against the time of need. Many of the well disposed among the virtuous poor, embrace these opportunities; and to them these valuable institutions afford important aid. But many of the lower orders of the poor are too inert or vicious to hearken to the invitations of these benevolent societies for the prevention of evil, and have not forecast sufficient to provide for their future wants. Much good is unquestionably done by the attractiveness of these societies. There are those who seek out the benefit offered to them; and there are some who take pains to point out to the notice of those in humble circumstances these friendly institutions. Still it is apparent that something further is needed. Philanthropists must not only give general invitations, but they must personally, like the Lord of the Vineyard, seek the poor, in their own abodes and places of resort, must converse, counsel, inform, persuade them, and reiterate their efforts. In no other way can the objects of these institutions be accomplished extensively and thoroughly. The field must not only be ploughed, the weeds eradicated here and there, but the ground must be *trenched*, every part explored minutely and thoroughly, the noxious plants extirpated, good seed plentifully sown, and the tender plants nourished with assiduous and untiring labour. On a full consideration of the scheme itself, and the state of things among us, one cannot but cordially approve its general features, and consider that it is unquestionably well adapted to promote religion and good morals among the lower classes of society in any place, city or village, where it may be introduced.

Should any cautious philanthropist, any theoretical benevolent man, who never engages with ardour in any plan to do good from fear of the obstacles in his way, or any associate of some splendid society, suggest that this scheme is *unnecessary*, because existing institutions embrace the cases it would reach and provide for; or that it is *objectionable* as it would introduce an inquisitorial surveillance of the poor, degrading to them; it may be replied, that the societies, which operate most extensively among us in relieving the evils of poverty and vice, are obnoxious to many of the objections urged against a superficial action over a wide and unlimited field, or a thorough labour only when notorious or prominent instances of evil are noticed. Far be it from us to intimate that they do not, by their well meant, and often judicious efforts, do much good, and bless, like mercy, him who gives as well as he who receives. In regard to the objection of intruding into the habitations of the poor, it is obvious that the good or evil performed depends chiefly on the characters of those who may assume the office of visitors and counselors. If ignorant, impertinent, visionary, or heretical, much evil may arise from such persons undertaking this aggressive movement into the precincts of the poor. Experience teaches that the friendly visits, kind inquiries, judicious advice, and religious instruction of the poor, by the more favoured classes, are received with respect and gratitude.

It is no part of this plan to have an organization, or the machinery of a society. Whatever is done must be planned and executed by individuals. It is supposed that every person, who has a location himself, can adopt and carry it into effect, at least in its prominent features. But it is not the influence of locality alone that is effectual. If there were a sufficient number of persons, willing and competent to undertake the prosecution of this system, who could parcel out amongst themselves the whole poor of a city, or a village; it would not be material whether all the dependents of any individual lived within certain limits or not. But as such an enterprise would be difficult, if not impracticable, and as it is essential to this plan that none should be overlooked, that the visitation be indiscriminate and universal, it appears absolutely necessary that a location should be adopted, although it might occasionally lead to giving up the oversight and improvement of a few of those who had heretofore been attended to by the individual, who has now assumed to himself a limited territory on which to employ all his leisure exclusively.

Let any benevolent man, who feels the importance of the object, and would test this system of local and individual philanthropy, take a small district in the neighbourhood of his own re-

sidence; let him cause his influence to pervade the entire district, and be as powerful as possible, avoiding unnecessary formality or publicity; considering, that his exertions should seem to those concerned only secondary, and by the way, not pretending, obtrusive or ceremonious; that he seek their confidence gradually, and have in view their worldly as well as their spiritual good; and should remember, that the following objects, are matters of primary importance.

1. *The religious education of the children.* It would not be prudent to interfere with the existing Sabbath Schools; to make any attempts to withdraw children from them, or, to discourage attendance on those who are solicited to go to them. There are many children, among the poor, who do not attend any Sunday school, or any church. These may be gathered, regularly taught, and if the instruction is made agreeable to them, the tendency will be to increase the school. It should be the duty of the instructor to visit the families of the children frequently, to ascertain the causes of absences, and endeavour to obtain the co-operation of parents to prevail on the children to attend regularly. Attendance should not be coerced, neither should it be allured by donations of clothing, rewards, medals, or money. It is easy to fill the seats of Sunday schools when such lures are held out, but it is difficult to ascertain whether motives of gain or vanity influence attendants, more than the desire of instruction. And instructors are prone, when scholars are inattentive, to multiply tempting allurements rather than to study the characters of the youth, and present mental incitements to attend on their instructions. These only are lastingly beneficial, while the former may become in time either entirely inefficacious, or positively injurious.

Connected with this subject, attention should be paid that the children attend with regularity on week-day instruction, as neglect of attendance is the cause of much of the vice and crime that are practised in adult life.

Perhaps it may not appear to be beneath the consideration of the philanthropist, whether sports and plays near their homes, of an inoffensive, healthy, and improving description may be invented or recommended to boys, to prevent the practice, in their holiday hours, of tormenting animals, devising and executing mischievous tricks, pilfering, wandering to great distances from home, and either learning or practising iniquity. Girls may also be induced to some indoor employment by some rewards to their industry.

It is all-important to induce youth to regular attendance at church on Sunday. The visiter can see that they are provided

with seats, (unless they attend with their parents) that they sit with proper associates, that they behave with propriety in church.

Very frequently children, of both sexes, are prevented from attending Sunday schools, or church, for want of what their parents deem suitable apparel. By attention, some employment can be provided for them, so that they can earn decent cloathing. This will ensure their attendance, and incite them to industry, by wearing the fruits of it.

2. *The religious and moral instruction of the parents and others.* It is a lamentable fact that the poor, to whom the gospel was first preached, are almost shut out from the most rational preaching, and by those who boast of best understanding the nature and design of christianity, and the character of its founder. They are delivered over to fanaticism, and bigotry, or left captives to satan. It appears to be a duty, in the first place, to provide seats or places in churches for the poor, and then to induce them to attend;—conversing with them on what they hear, going sometimes to the places where they worship, and thus establishing a community of feeling, an interest in their religious habits and improvement; lending or distributing tracts—lending or selling in preference, as people are more apt to read what they buy or borrow than what is given to them.

There is such a propensity among the lower classes to attend on evening meetings, and it is so natural for them to prefer familiar religious instruction to the more formal and didactic discourses of the pulpit, that encouragement should be given to evening meetings in the location, when neighbours and friends can come together to unite in singing, praying, and hearing the truths of the gospel preached, as it were, in their own tongue.

It would be well too to establish a library in the district for the use of the poor. The visiter, or any one else, might be librarian. The books could be collected by private donations, or a collection of money might be made by the friends of the visiter for this object.

3. *Encouraging the industry, temperance, economy, and savings of the poor.*

1. Nothing should be done to induce an improper reliance upon others for what God has given them power to do for themselves. It is the grand evil of most of the charitable societies that they abate self-reliance. But in various ways an excitement can be given to reluctant labour, work can be brought to those who, by infirmity, are prevented from seeking it, advice and direction can be given when work can be obtained, the worthy and industrious can be recommended to employers, occupations

of an honest, virtuous, and useful kind may, by the influence of persuasion, be adapted for such pursuits as tend to the injury of the individual or of society.

2. The poor should be encouraged to temperance, especially in refraining from ardent spirits, the foul fiend that flies through our land, blasting by its influence domestic comfort, the hopes of morality and religion. Wholesome and agreeable substitutes for these poisonous drinks should be introduced and recommended. Provision might be made for supplying the poor with the necessities of life, and its comforts, without their being compelled to resort for them to those licensed shops, which, 'thick as autumnal leaves,' are spread over our city.

3. The poor, strange as it may seem, are more deficient in domestic economy, than any other class of society. They are addicted to wastefulness, improvidence, and ignorance in purchasing and preserving articles of food. A local philanthropist will furnish them useful receipts for the home production of articles of food and raiment; will give them advice as to times, places, quantities, &c. in relation to making purchases; and in general enable them to lay out their money or labour to best advantage in the support of themselves and their families.

4. To enable the poor to help themselves is the best act of friendship toward them. In general they have little forecast, or habit of saving for future wants. They are insensible of the rapid accumulation of small sums, on interest. The Fuel Savings Institution enables them to provide for one necessary of life, every year, and here they should be exhorted to deposit their small savings. The Saving Bank is an admirable institution which enables them to place in security and accumulation what can be spared from the products of their daily labour for years to come. This institution, the offspring of an enlarged philanthropy, and emphatically the poor man's bank, is not extensively known by the poor classes; its tables of accumulation are not explained to them; and they are not advised and assisted to deposit in it their spare money against future exigencies. All this would be easily done and its advantages effectually secured to them, by the services of their local visiter.

There are numberless ills that beset the path of the poor; and many occasions offer for extending toward them advice in difficulty. A local visiter might often be the means of preventing quarrels, or reconciling those at variance, of protecting the poor from the injustice of oppressors, of vindicating the conduct of their employers, of relieving from the grasp of merciless creditors, of extricating the unfortunate from pecuniary embarrassments, of preserving from temptations to fraud or violence, of

being the almoner, benefactor, and vicergerent of God in the little neighbourhood of his benevolent operations.

But we are admonished by the length of this article not to dwell longer upon this very interesting and important subject. We conclude by expressing a sanguine hope that this plan will be greeted and adopted by numbers who have both ability, leisure, and zeal, in imitation of the great pattern of all moral goodness, thus to 'go about doing good.'

ARTICLE XI.

Sermons on those doctrines of the Gospel, and on those constituent principles of the Church, which Christian Professors have made the subject of controversy. By AARON BANCROFT, D. D. Pastor of the second congregational church in Worcester. Worcester Wm. Manning & Son, May, 1822. pp. 429. (Sold by Wells & Lilly, Boston.)

So much has of late been written on the great subjects of controversy in the christian church, that we took up the volume of sermons, of which we are now to give an account, under some disadvantages; for those who have often travelled over this ground, are apt to grow weary in their course, and perhaps to overlook from becoming less observant, what is peculiarly worthy of attention. But we were so much pleased by the 'Introduction,' written by the publishing committee, that we have read the volume, and find it to correspond with the estimate there given of its merits. As we cannot describe the design, and the general execution of these sermons, and the motives which led to their publication better than they are there described, we select the following remarks :

'Candid inquirers are every day multiplying among us, "calling no man master on earth," but ready to avail themselves of the labours of wisdom and experience to guide them in the study of the sacred oracles. Such a state of feeling in the community seems to require, that a denomination of Christians, whose distinguishing views of religion have been so long the theme of animadversion as have been those of Unitarians, should be able to refer those who would examine them, to authors, where they may be found stated with clearness and defended with candour. To this denomination belong the publishers of the following Sermons, and with these impressions they present them to the publick. It is not because the opinions they have embraced have not been ably explained and supported by numerous writers of profound erudition and exalted piety, that they deem this publication necessary. If the correctness of religious

tenets could be tested by the talents, the learning, or the moral worth of those who have maintained them the faith of Unitarians might safely rest on such authorities as Locke, and Newton, and Clark, and Lardner, and Emlyn, and Priestley, and Price. In the works of these distinguished men, and of many others, may be found a vindication of the sentiments they profess. But these are not within the reach of the great body of readers, nor are they *all* adapted to such capacities. The publishers are not aware, that the Christian community are possessed of a book, which exhibits a connected view of their doctrines in the form of *Sermons*, (and these are most likely to be read by persons of common attainments,) while Calvinists have been careful to fill the *world* with sectarian books of every description, from the most learned, down to the child's primer. The discourses in this volume, with the exception of one or two, were delivered by the author to his own people within the last two years, and were not written in the expectation that they would be given to the world. He has yielded his opinion of the expediency of the publication to the solicitations of his friends. They form a regular series upon those prominent doctrines of Christianity which now divide the two principal classes, called *Orthodox* or *Calvinistick*, and *Liberal* or *Unitarian*. In these discourses is presented, in connected order, a fair statement of the doctrines of Calvinism, as laid down by the most approved writers; the leading objections to which those doctrines are liable, are brought into view, together with the opinions which liberal Christians oppose to them; and all this is done in a style and manner easy to be comprehended by ordinary understandings. If the reader should think them not entitled to the credit, either of novelty of arrangement, or originality of argument, he is reminded, that they were not composed to enlighten the *learned*, but to instruct a promiscuous assembly. He will find, however, what is, perhaps, of more consequence, the great grounds of difference between these contending parties, stated with distinctness, and treated with liberality, pp. vi, vii.

One of the principal excellences of these sermons is, we conceive, the clear statements which they contain of the main doctrines in dispute. This to be sure is a task of no small difficulty; for there are in the doctrines of different sects, so many qualifications and refinements, which, however unimportant they may be in themselves, are regarded as very momentous by those who make or receive them, that it is extremely difficult to state with precision, what is believed by those who pass under a general appellation, derived from a distinguished leader. Such in particular is the case with the *Calvinists*; for among the thousands who bear the name, and glory in it, a great majority reject much of what constitutes their legitimate claim to the title. With this deduction, inseparable from the case, we think Dr. Bancroft has stated fairly the doctrines of the different parties. In representing the opinions of trinitarians and calvinists, he has

uniformly, as far as we have observed, quoted their strongest proof-texts, and never fears to meet his opponents on grounds of their own choosing.

It is well known that controversial preaching has not, in general, been in high favour among the liberal clergy, since they believe on good grounds, that what more immediately affects the practice, and conduces to holy living, should be the chief end of their public instructions. But it is equally well known, that what have been called, in vague or inappropriate terms, the doctrines of grace, or the doctrines of the reformation, have been urged on the public, of late years, with a zeal, which aspires to the exclusion of all but their adherents, from the pale of the christian church; and that it therefore behoves liberal christians to defend their faith, and vindicate their cause. Dr. Bancroft has shown that this can be done in a way at once popular and convincing; that the statements and reasonings on the several points of controversy can be so condensed, and so perspicuously expressed, as to make a very useful series of lectures for a promiscuous audience; and that the subjects may be treated in a manner so open, plain, and direct, so free from harshness and denunciation, as to conciliate all, and to excite no party zeal inconsistent with the public devotion of the Sabbath. In regard to the results at which he arrives, on several subjects embraced, there is, and probably always will be, while *we see through a glass darkly*, diversity of opinion; but whenever they are treated with a temper so mild, and in a manner so honest and unreserved, christianity can suffer nothing from the free and full expositions of her authorised ministers. We speak here with special reference to diversity of opinion among *liberal* christians; particularly respecting the person of Jesus Christ, and the future punishment of the wicked. On these subjects Unitarians disagree; but with mutual charity. When it is so difficult to obtain precise and definite opinions, it becomes us not to be too positive in our scheme of faith; and though, in its widest sense, we do not maintain the innocence of error, we are confident that some of the most inquiring and intelligent christians find enough of perplexity in the subjects to which we have here alluded.

We have not room for an analysis of these sermons. Extending over so wide a field, the reader must not expect to find the treatment of every subject or doctrine complete; not always, probably, so complete as he may wish; but unless we have read them very carelessly, we can safely say they do contain as much matter, and that which is as well arranged, as could reasonably be expected in the same compass.

We select a few passages, as specimens of the good sense and

discrimination of the author. In the first sermon, entitled, "Religion in man, a rational and voluntary service," we find the following remarks on the use of *reason* :

'In respect to the office of Reason in religious concerns, we hold that without the exercise of reason, no man can be a consistent disciple of Jesus Christ. Indeed, we perceive that Calvinists never reject the authority of reason, when it can be brought to support their positions. We hold, that by the exercise of reason, a judgment is formed of the evidence by which our religion is proved to be true—by reason we make up our opinions of the doctrines contained in the sacred scriptures—and by reason we pronounce on the purity and excellence of the precepts and institutions of the gospel. Though we do not pretend to comprehend God in his attributes, in his works or ways, yet we say that our duty extends no further than our capacity for knowledge extends; and that we cannot consistently admit any position as a doctrine of divine revelation, which consists of a set of terms conveying no distinct ideas to the mind, much less if it involves a direct contradiction, or is manifestly opposed to admitted principles of rectitude and goodness. Deny this, and we are denied the power to distinguish between a true and false religion, between good and evil, between virtue and vice.' pp. 26, 27.

After a summary of the system of Calvin, Dr. B. makes the following strong appeal to our moral sense of right and wrong.

'Are we not shocked by the mere thought of attributing this system of moral government to God? Is this scheme consistent with the mercy, the goodness, or the justice of Deity? Who appointed Adam to act in this extent for us? How can his sin be imputed to his posterity in such a manner as to render them guilty by his offence? If virtue and vice be not personal attributes, I know not what constitutes moral qualities. I can as easily conceive of natural qualities being imputed, as moral; as easily conceive of a tall, or a short, of a strong or weak man, by imputation, as of a righteous or sinful man, by imputation.

'If Christ fully atoned for the sins of the elect; if, by his sufferings, he made complete satisfaction to the violated law—is the mercy of God manifested by their acquittal? When the surety pays a debt in full, the creditor exercises no clemency in discharging the principal. Does it comport with the justice of God, everlastingly to punish men, who receive a sinful nature as an inheritance, who on earth sin from necessity, and who are absolutely denied the means of acquiring moral or religious qualifications? Can we, especially, reconcile to the justice of God, the infliction of aggravated punishment on sinners, for not accepting the salvation of the gospel, when, in the plan of grace, God passed them by, and ordained them to dishonour and misery? Do not our minds recoil, I was about to have said, with horror, from these principles of Calvinism?

'There is not a civil ruler, nor the head of a family in Christen-

dom, who would not be offended, if the system of government were attributed to him in the affairs of a nation, or the transactions of a household, which Calvin attributes to God in the moral government of our world.' pp. 206, 7.

Now though the Calvinists of New-England deny, in words, the doctrine of imputation, yet there remain those of total depravity, personal election, &c. indeed almost every thing, it seems to us, adhering to naked calvinism, which is irreconcilable with the moral perfections of Deity.

The following passage aimed against the calvinistic doctrine of effectual calling, is of similar import to the last cited, and does not appear to us to be clothed in stronger language than the occasion demands :

' When we represent the Christian dispensations to be adapted to the human capacity, and requiring from men a service they possess the power to perform ; when we state that God grants all the well-disposed subjects of his government the assistance which is suited to the capacity of an accountable being, and at the same time requires them to co-operate with him, by the proper exercise of the strength he has given them—we attribute to God the glory of an affectionate parent, the glory of a merciful and benevolent governour, and a just and righteous judge. But when we describe God as a being, who does not adapt the constitution of his government to the capacities of his creatures, who are the subjects of it ; who forces some, by his own irresistible power, to obey his laws, and then loves and rewards them for this forced obedience ; while he denies his aid to the majority of his family, who can make no effectual effort without his special assistance ; and hates them for lying in the impotence, where he placed them, and decreed that they should lie ; and at last punishes them with everlasting misery for not doing that, which he determined they never should do, and denied them the power to accomplish—then we ascribe to God the glory, if any glory, of a despotick, cruel being ; the glory of a tyrant, who makes to himself favourites from the mere dictates of a capricious mind ; who loves and hates his subjects from blind prejudice ; who rewards and punishes them without any regard to intrinsic worth of character. Far be this imputation from our blessed God. Far be it from God that he should do iniquity, and from the Almighty that he should pervert justice. The works of a man he will render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.' pp. 266, 7.

We cheerfully recommend these sermons to all inquiring and intelligent Christians, who are not deeply read in polemic theology ; believing, as we do, that many such who now imagine themselves Calvinists, will find that they approximate nearer to the liberal views of the author, than to the tenets of the reputed orthodox sect. Apart from the sentiments, they will be read with plea-

A New-England Tale.

sure for their lucid order, for the simplicity and perspicuity of the style, and for occasional displays of eloquence natural and unadorned. Blemishes indeed are to be found, consisting in the use of a few unauthorised words and phrases; but the general purity of expression atones for these small defects.

However we may differ from Dr. B. in some of his tenets, we feel gratified for what he has done, and he has done much, in the common cause of liberal christianity; and that while, in these discourses, he laboured so faithfully, with a single regard to his own parochial charge, "he has yielded his opinion of the expediency of the publication to the solicitations of his friends."

ARTICLE XII.

A New-England Tale, or, Sketches of New-England character and manners. New York, E. Bliss & E. White, 12mo. pp. 277.

We are glad to be able to recommend this as a sensible, well written, religious tale. It is far better than many of the books which are published as religious stories, both in being a more faithful representation of the manner in which religion does and may mingle itself in the ordinary affairs of life, and in setting it forth in a more tangible and attainable form. As 'Sketches of New-England character and manners,' it is sufficiently faithful and sometimes very happy. We cannot but think, however, that this is unfortunately expressed in the title, as it presents a point of discussion upon which judgments and tastes will necessarily differ, and tends to provoke a severity of criticism, which only the most extraordinary success will propitiate. Many will fancy to themselves something which they do not find, and the absence of which will dissatisfy them with the whole book. And besides; we apprehend that the design of the work is quite as much to illustrate the use and abuse of religious principles, which are common to all parts of Christendom, as to delineate local manners. Its chief, certainly its most important object in our eyes, is, to exhibit in certain characters the genuine operation of christian truth, pervading silently but thoroughly the whole system of thought and conduct, and seen in its beautiful effects, but without any display of the cause, without parade, ostentation, loquacity or profession. And in order to show, that these fruits of religion spring not from any peculiar scheme of doctrinal belief, but from the great fundamental prac-

tical truths which are common to all believers; they are made to appear in characters drawn from different sects. The three persons in whom the christian character is most distinctly exemplified, are a Quaker, a Methodist, and a Congregationalist,—christians, and not sectarians. In Mrs. Wilson, who is set in strong contrast with these, are exhibited the mischiefs of false confidence in articles of belief, and the spiritual pride and ruinous self delusion which are the result of zeal for forms. In her children, who are ill tempered, deceitful, and despisers of religion, are exemplified the evil effects of bad education. They have been ruined by the violent and injudicious management of their mother, who compels them to burdensome religious observances, while at the same time, by witnessing her neglect of the spirit of religion, they learn to think all pretence of piety hypocrisy. Edward Erskine is a different personage still. In him we have a young man of fine natural powers and good education, lost to himself and the community, to which he was capable of being a benefactor, for want of the guidance of moral and religious principle. These are the principal characters, which separately and together are to inculcate the important lesson for which the story is framed. And they are made so to play their parts as to do it happily and satisfactorily.

These characters are well conceived, distinctly portrayed, and well sustained. The tale is carried on by separate and sometimes insulated scenes, many of which are given with great power and possess a strong interest. We will not particularize, but will presently lay before our readers a few specimens.

There is but one objection which we feel disposed to make, and in regard to that we venture to express our regret. Amongst the various individuals who are exhibited of different sects, Mrs. Wilson is the only one who is said to hold the calvinistic articles. She maintains them in their most bold and pernicious form, and they bring down disastrous consequences on herself and family. So far is very well, and doubtless a picture to the life. We are only sorry that another individual was not introduced, with the same creed, but sincerely and heartily religious. This would have completed the illustration of one principle, which we suppose was designed to be inculcated, that the true christian character stands independent of all sectarian and speculative differences. It may be said, and no doubt justly, that the doctrines of that school, if held without mixture, just as they are stated in the books, can hardly be conceived to have any other than an evil influence. But then we know very well, that in actual life, they rarely are thus held, but are usually so neutralized by the great and essential principles of religion,

which exist every where around, and by the power of conscience and natural good feeling, that their demoralizing operation is not witnessed, but they lie in the mind as little else than barren notions of abstract speculation. As the horrible mischiefs they are capable of effecting, when fairly and fully brought into the conduct of life, are admirably displayed in the history of one individual; we should have been glad to have it shown in that of another, how the simple and essential truths of Christ, when made living principles of action, are capable of triumphing over these dangerous dogmas, crushing their power and destroying their poison.

We deem it unnecessary to enter at all into the story, as we hope our readers will be induced to consult the book itself. To assist them in some measure to form a judgment for themselves, we will quote a few passages. The first relate to Mrs. Wilson.

‘Mrs. Wilson had fancied herself one of the subjects of an awakening at an early period of her life; had passed through the ordeal of a church-examination with great credit, having depicted in glowing colours the opposition of her natural heart to the decrees, and her subsequent joy in the doctrine of election. She thus assumed the form of godliness, without feeling its power. Are there not many such? some, who, in those times of excitement, during which many pass from indifference to holiness, and many are converted from sin to righteousness, delude themselves and others with vain forms of words, and professions of faith?’

‘Mrs. Wilson was often heard to denounce those who insisted on the necessity of good works, as Pharisees;—she was thankful, she said, that she should not presume to appear before her Judge with any of the ‘filthy rags of her own righteousness;’—it would be easy getting to heaven if the work in any way depended on ourselves;—any body could ‘deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.’ How easy it is, we leave to those to determine, who have sought to adjust their lives by this divine rule.

‘Mrs. Wilson rejected the name of the Pharisee, but the proud, oppressive, bitter spirit of the Jewish bigot was manifest in the complacency with which she regarded her own faith, and the illiberality she cherished towards every person, of every denomination, who did not believe what she believed, and act according to her rule of right. As might be expected, her family was regulated according to ‘the letter,’ but the ‘spirit that giveth life’ was not there. Religion was the ostensible object of every domestic arrangement; but you might look in vain for the peace and good will which a voice from heaven proclaimed to be the objects of the mission of our Lord.

‘Mrs. Wilson’s children produced such fruits as might be expected from her culture. The timid among them had recourse to con-

stant evasion, and to the meanest artifices, to hide the violation of laws which they hated; and the bolder were engaged in a continual conflict with the mother, in which rebellion often trampled on authority.' pp. 31, 32.

'Mrs. Wilson survived these events but a few years. She was finally carried off by the scrofula, a disease from which she had suffered all her life, and which had probably increased the natural asperity of her temper; as all evils, physical as well as moral, certainly make us worse, if they do not make us better. Elvira was summoned to her death-bed; but she arrived too late to receive either the reproaches or forgiveness of her mother. Jane faithfully attended her through her last illness, and most kindly ministered to the diseases of her body. Her mind no human comfort could reach; no earthly skill touch its secret springs. The disease was attended with delirium; and she had no rational communication with any one from the beginning of her illness. This Jane afterwards sincerely deplored to Mr. Lloyd, who replied, "I would not sit like the Egyptians in judgment on the dead. Thy aunt has gone with her record to Him who alone knows the secrets of the heart, and therefore is alone qualified to judge His creatures; but for our own benefit, Jane, and for the sake of those whose probation is not past, let us ever remember the wise saying of William Penn, 'a man cannot be the better for that religion for which his neighbour is the worse.' I have no doubt thy aunt has suffered some natural compunctions for her gross failure in the performance of her duties; but she felt safe in a sound faith. It is reported, that one of the Popes said of himself, that 'as Eneas Sylvius he was a damnable heretic, but as Pius II. an orthodox Pope.'"'

"Then you believe," replied Jane, "that my unhappy aunt deceived herself by her clamorous profession?"

"Undoubtedly. Ought we to wonder that she effected that imposition on herself, by the aid of self-love, (of all the most blinding,) since we have heard, in her funeral sermon, her religious experiences detailed as the triumphs of a saint; her strict attention on religious ordinances commended, as if they were the end and not the means of a religious life; since we (who cannot remember a single gracious act of humility in her whole life) have been told, as a proof of her gracious state, that the last rational words she pronounced were, that she 'was of sinners the chief?' There seems to be a curious spiritual alchemy in the utterance of these words; for we cannot say, that those who use them mean to 'palter in a double sense,' but they are too often spoken and received as the evidence of a hopeful state. Professions and declarations have crept in among the protestants, to take the place of the mortifications and penances of the ancient church; so prone are men to find some easier way to heaven than the toilsome path of obedience.'" pp. 258—260.

The following is of a different character. Jane had been called by old John to see at his cottage the young woman who had been seduced by David Wilson, and was just dying.

‘Jane followed John into his little habitation. The old couple had kindly resigned their only bed to the sufferer. She was sitting as John had described her, fixed as a statue. Her beautiful black glossy curls, which had been so often admired and envied, were in confusion, and clustered in rich masses over her temples and neck. A tear that had started from the fountain of feeling, now sealed for ever, hung on the dark rich eye-lash that fringed her downcast eye. Jane wondered that any thing so wretched could look so lovely. Crazy Bet was kneeling at the foot of the bed, and apparently absorbed in prayer, for her eyes were closed, and her lips moved, though they emitted no sound. The old woman sat in the corner of the fire-place, smoking a broken pipe, to sooth the unusual agitation she felt.

‘Jane advanced towards the bed. “Speak to her,” said John. Jane stooped, and laid her hand gently on Mary’s. She raised her eyes for the first time, and turned them on Jane with a look of earnest inquiry, and then shaking her head, she said in a low mournful voice—“No, no; we cannot be parted; you mean to take her to heaven, and you say I am guilty, and must not go. They told me you were coming—you need not hide your wings—I know you—there is none but an angel would look upon me with such pity.”

““Oh!” exclaimed Jane in an agony, “can nothing be done for her? at least let us take away this dead child, it is growing cold in her arms.” She attempted to take the child, and Mary relaxed her hold; but as she did so, she uttered a faint scream—became suddenly pale as ‘monumental marble,’—and fell back on the pillow.

““Ah, she is gone!” exclaimed John.

‘Crazy Bet sprang on her feet, and raised her hand—“Hush!” said she, “I heard a voice saying, ‘Her sins are forgiven’—she is one ‘come out of great tribulation.’”

‘There were a few moments of as perfect stillness as if they had all been made dumb and motionless by the stroke of death. Jane was the first to break silence—“Did she,” she inquired of the old man, “express any penitence—any hope?”

‘John shook his head. “Them things did not seem to lay on her mind; and I did not think it worth while to disturb her about them. Ah, Miss, the great thing is how we live, not how we die.”

‘Jane felt the anxiety, so natural, to obtain some religious expression, that should indicate preparation in the mind of the departed.

““Surely,” said she, “it is never too late to repent—to beg forgiveness.”

““No, Miss;” replied John, who seemed to have religious notions of his own—“especially when there has been such a short ac-

count as this poor child had ; but the work must be all between the creature and the Creator, and for my part, I don't place much dependance on what people say on a death-bed. I have lived a long life, Miss Jane, and many a one have I seen, and heard too, when sickness and distress were heavy upon them, and death staring them in the face, and they could not sin any more—they would seem to repent, and talk as beautiful as any saint ; but if the Lord took his hand from them, and they got well again, they went right back into the old track. No, Miss Jane, it is the life,—it is the life, we must look to. This child," he added, going to the bed, and laying his brown and shrivelled hand upon her fair young brow, now 'chill and changeless,' "this child was but sixteen, she told me so. The Lord only knows what temptations she has had ; He it is, Miss Jane, that has put that in our hearts that makes us feel sorry for her now ; and can you think that He is less pitiful than we are ? I think she will be beaten with few stripes ; but," he concluded solemnly, covering his face with his hands,—“we are poor ignorant creatures ; it is all a mystery after this world ; we know nothing about it.”

“Yes,” said Jane, “we do know, John, that all will be right.”

“True,” he replied ; “and it is that should make us lay our fingers on our mouths and be still.” pp. 150—153.

The parting scene between Edward and Jane is very fine.

‘Edward entered, and walking up to her, looked over her shoulder as if to see what book had so rivetted her attention. It chanced to be Penn’s “Fruits of Solitude.” “Curse on all quakers and quakerism !” said he, seizing the book rudely and throwing it across the room ; “wherever I go, I am crossed by them.”

‘He walked about, perturbed and angry. Jane rose to leave him, for now, she thought, was not the time to come to an explanation ; but Erskine was not in a humour to be opposed in any thing. He placed his back against the door, and said, “No, Jane, you shall not leave me now. I have much to tell you. Forgive my violence. There is a point beyond which no rational creature can keep his temper. I have been urged to that point ; and, thank Heaven, I have not learnt that smooth-faced hypocrisy that can seem what it is not.”

‘Jane trembled excessively. Erskine had touched the “electric chain ;” she sunk into a chair, and burst into tears.

“I was right,” he exclaimed, “it is by your authority, and at your instigation, that I am dogged from place to place by that impertinent fellow ; you have entered into a *holy league* ; but know, Miss Elton, there is a tradition in our family, that no Erskine was ever ruled by his wife ; and the sooner the lady who is destined to be mine learns not to interfere in my affairs, the more agreeable it will be to me, and the more safe for herself.”

‘Jane’s indignation was roused by this strange attack ; and resuming her composure, she said, “If you mean that I shall under-

stand you, you must explain yourself, for I am ignorant and innocent of any thing you may suspect me of."

"Thank heaven!" replied Erskine, "I believe you, Jane; you know in the worst of times I have believed you; and it was natural to be offended that you should distrust me. You shall know the 'head and front of my offending.' The sins that have stirred up such a missionary zeal in that body of quakerism, will weigh very light in the scales of love."

"Perhaps," said Jane gravely, "I hold a more impartial balance than you expect."

"Then you do not love me, Jane, for love is, and ought to be, blind; but I am willing to make the trial, I will never have it repeated to me, that 'if you knew all, you would withdraw your affections from me.' No one shall say that you have not loved me, with all my youthful follies on my head. I know you are a little puritanical; but that is natural to one who has had so much to make her miserable: the unhappy are apt to affect religion. But you are young and curable, if you can be rescued from this quaker climate and influence."

Edward still rattled on, and seemed a little to dread making the promised communication; but at last, inferring from Jane's seriousness that she was anxious, and impatient himself to have it over, he went on to tell her—that from the beginning of their engagement Mr. Lloyd had undertaken the *surveillance* of his morals; that if he had not been fortified by his antipathy to Quakers, he should have surrendered his confidence to him.

"No gentleman," he said, "no man of honourable feeling—no man of proper sensibility—would submit to the interference of a stranger—a man not much older than himself—in matters that concerned himself alone; it was an intolerable outrage. If Jane was capable of a fair judgment, she would allow that it was so."

Jane mildly replied, that she could only judge from the facts; as yet she had heard nothing but accusations. Erskine said, he had imagined he was stating his case in a court of love and not of law; but he had no objection, since his judge was as sternly just as an old Roman father, to state facts. He could pardon Mr. Lloyd his eagerness to make him adopt his plans of improvement in the natural and moral world: to the first he might have been led by his taste for agriculture, (which he believed was unaffected) and to the second he was pledged by the laws of holy quaker church. Still he said none but a Quaker would have thought of meddling with the affairs of people who were strangers to him—however, that might be pardoned: as he said before, he supposed every Quaker was bound to that officiousness, by an oath, or an *affirmation*, for 'tender conscience' sake. "But my sweet judge, you do not look propitious," Erskine continued after this misty preamble, from which Jane could gather nothing but that his prejudices and pride had thrown a dark shadow over all the virtues of Mr. Lloyd.

“I cannot, Erskine, look propitious on your sneers against the principles of my excellent friend.”

“Perhaps,” replied Erskine tartly, “his practice will be equally immaculate in your eyes. And now, Jane, I beseech you for once to forget that Mr. Lloyd is your *excellent friend*; a man who bestowed some trifling favours on your childhood, and remember the right of one to whom you at least owe your love—though he would neither accept that, nor your gratitude, as a debt.”

Jane assured him she was ready to hear any thing and every thing impartially that he would tell her. He replied, that he detested stoical impartiality; that he wished her to enter into his loves and his hates, without expecting a reason in their madness. But since you must have the reason, I will not withhold it. As I told you, I submitted to a thousand vexatious little impertinences: he is plausible and gentlemanly in his manners, so there was nothing I could resent, till after a contemptible affair between John the old basket maker and the Woodhulls, in which I used my humble professional skill to extricate my friends, who had been perhaps a little hasty in revenging the impertinence of the foolish old man. Lloyd was present at the trial before the justice: I fancied from the expression of his face that he wished my friends to be foiled, and this quickened my faculties. I succeeded in winning my cause in spite of law and equity, for they were both against me; and this you know is rather flattering to one's talents. The Woodhulls overwhelmed me with praises and gratitude. I felt sorry for the silly old fool, whom they had very unceremoniously unhoused, and I proposed a small subscription to enable him to pay the bill of costs, &c. which was his only receipt from the prosecution. I headed it, and it was soon made up; but the old fellow declined it with as much dignity as if he had been a king in disguise. It was an affair of no moment, and I should probably never have thought of it again, if Lloyd had not the next day made it the text upon which he preached as long a sermon as I would hear, upon the characters of the Woodhulls; he even went so far as to presume to remonstrate with me upon my connexion with them, painted their conduct on various occasions in the blackest colours, spoke of their pulling down the old hovel, which had in fact been a mere cumberer of the ground for twenty years, as an act of oppression and cruelty; said their habits were all bad; their pursuits all either foolish or dangerous. I restrained myself as long as possible, and then I told him, that I should not submit to hear any calumnies against my friends; friends who were devoted to me, who would go to perdition to serve me. If they had foibles, they were those that belonged to open, generous natures; they were open-handed, and open-hearted, and had not smothered their passions, till they were quite extinguished. I told him, they were honourable young men, not governed by the fear that ‘holds the wretch in order.’ He might have known that I meant to tell him they were what he

was not ; but he seemed quite unmoved, and I spoke more plainly. I had never, I told him, been accustomed to submit my conduct to the revision of any one ; that he had no right, and I knew not why he presumed to assume it, to haunt me like an external conscience ; that my 'genius was not rebuked by his,' neither would it be, if all the marvellous light of all his brethren was concentrated in his luminous mind."

"Oh, Erskine, Erskine !" exclaimed Jane, "was this your return for his friendly warning?"

"Hear me through, Jane, before you condemn me. He provoked me more than I have told you. He said that I was responsible to you for my virtue ; that I betrayed your trust by exposing myself to be the companion, or the prey, of the vices of others. Would you have had me borne this, Jane ? Would you thank me for allowing, that he was more careful of your happiness than I am ?—Well," added he, after a moment's pause, "as you do not reply, I presume you have not yet decided that point. We separated, my indignation roused to the highest pitch, and he cold and calm as ever. When we next met, there was no difference in his manners to me that a stranger would have observed ; but I perceived his words were all weighed and measured, as if he would not venture soon again to disturb a lion spirit."

"Is this all ?" asked Jane.

"Not half," replied Erskine ; and after a little hesitation he continued, "I perceive that it is impossible for you to see things in the light I do. Your aunt with her everlasting cant, your Methodist friend with her old maid notions, and this precise quaker, above all, have made you so rigid, have so bound and stiffened every youthful indulgent feeling, that I have as little hope of a favourable judgment, as a heretic could have had in the dark ages, from his triple-crowned tyrant."

"Then," said Jane, rising, "it is as unnecessary as painful for me to hear the rest."

"No, you shall not go," he replied ; "I expect miracles from the touch of love. I think I have an advocate in your heart, that will plead for me against the whole 'privileged order,' of professors—of every cast. Do not be shocked, my dear Jane ; do not, for your own sake, make mountains of mole-hills, when I tell you, that the young men of the village instituted a club, three or four months since, who meet once a week socially, perhaps a little oftener, when we are all about home : and"—he hesitated a moment, as one will when he comes to a ditch and is uncertain whether to spring over, to retreat, or to find some other way ; but he had too much pride to conceal the fact, and though he feared a little to announce it, yet he was determined to justify it. Jane was still mute, and he went on—"We play cards ; sometimes we have played later and higher perhaps than we should if we had all been in the leading-strings of prudence ; all been bred quakers. Our

club are men of honour and spirit, high-minded gentlemen; a few disputes, misunderstandings, might arise now and then, as they will among people who do not weigh every word, lest they should chance to have an idle one to account for; but, till the last evening, we have, in the main, spent our time together as whole-souled fellows should, in mirth and jollity. As I said, last evening unfortunately——”

“Tell me nothing more, Mr. Erskine; I have heard enough,” interrupted Jane.

“What! you will not listen to friend Lloyd’s reproaches; not listen to what most roused his holy indignation?”

“I have no wish to hear any thing further,” replied Jane. “I have heard enough to make my path plain before me. I loved you, Edward; I confessed to you that I did.”

“And you do not any longer?”

“I cannot; the illusion is vanished. Neither do you love me.” Edward would have interrupted her, but she begged him to hear her, with a dignified composure, that convinced him this was no sudden burst of resentment, no girlish pique that he might sooth with flattery and professions. “A most generous impulse, Edward, led you to protect an oppressed orphan; and I thought the devotion of my heart and my life were a small return to you. It is but a few months since. Is not love an engrossing passion? But what sacrifices have you made to it? Oh, Edward! if in the youth and spring of your affection, I have not had more power over you, what can I hope from the future?”

“Hope!—believe every thing, Jane. I will be as plastic as wax, in your hands. You shall mould me as you will.”

“No, Edward; I have tried my power over you, and found it wanting. Broken confidence cannot be restored.”

“Jane, you are rash; you are giving up independence—protection. If you reject me, who will defend you from your aunt? Do you forget that you are still in her power?”

“No,” replied Jane; “but I have the defence of innocence, and I do not fear her. It was not your protection, it was not independence I sought, it was a refuge in your affection;—that has failed me. Oh, Edward!” she continued, rising, “examine your heart as I have examined mine, and you will find the tie is dissolved that bound us; there can be no enduring love without sympathy; our feelings, our pursuits, our plans, our inclinations, are all diverse.”

“You are unkind, ungrateful, Jane.”

“I must bear that reproach as I can; but I do not deserve it, Mr. Erskine.”

Erskine imagined he perceived some relenting in the faltering of her voice, and he said, “Do not be implacable, Jane; you are too young, too beautiful, to treat the follies of youth as if they were incurable; give me a few months probation, I will do any thing you require; abandon the club, give up my friends.”

‘Jane paused for a moment, but there was no wavering in her resolution—“No, Mr. Erskine; we must part now; if I loved you, I could not resist the pleadings of my heart.”

‘Erskine entreated—promised every thing; till convinced that Jane did not deceive him or herself, his vanity and pride, mortified and wounded, came to his relief, and changed his entreaties to sarcasms. He said the rigour that would immolate every human feeling, would fit her to be the Elect Lady of a Shaker society; he assured her that he would emulate her stoicism.

“‘I am no stoic,” replied Jane; and the tears gushed from her eyes. “Oh, Erskine! I would make any exertions, any sacrifices to render you what I once thought you. I would watch and toil to win you to virtue—to heaven. If I believed you loved me, I could still hope, for I know that affection is self-devoting, and may overcome all things. “Edward,” she continued, with a trembling voice, “there is one subject, and that nearest to my heart, on which I discovered soon after our engagement we were at utter variance. When I first heard you trifle with the obligations of religion, and express a distrust of its truths, I felt my heart chill. I reproached myself bitterly for having looked on your insensibility on this subject as the common carelessness of a gay young man, to be expected, and forgiven, and easily cured. These few short months have taught me much; have taught me, Erskine, not that religion is the only sure foundation of virtue—that I knew before—but they have taught me, that religion alone can produce unity of spirit; alone can resist the cares, the disappointments, the tempests of life; that it is the only indissoluble bond—for when the silver chord is loosed, this bond becomes immortal. I have felt that my most sacred pleasures and hopes must be solitary.” Erskine made no reply; he felt the presence of a sanctified spirit. “You now know all, Erskine. The circumstances you have told me this evening, I partly knew before.”

““From Lloyd?” said Edward. “He then knew, as he insinuated, why the ‘treasure of your cheek had faded.’”

““You do him wrong. He has never mentioned your name since the morning I left my aunt’s. I heard them, by accident, from John.”

““It is, in truth, time we should part, when you can give your ear to every idle rumour;” he snatched his hat, and was going.

‘Jane laid her hand on his arm, “Yes, it is time,” she said, “that we should part; but not in anger. Let us exchange forgiveness, Edward.” Erskine turned and wept bitterly. For a few gracious moments his pride, his self-love, all melted away, and he felt the value, the surpassing excellence of the blessing he had forfeited. He pressed the hand Jane had given him, to his lips fervently, “Oh, Jane,” he said, “you are an angel; forget my follies, and think of me with kindness.”

“I shall remember nothing of the past,” she said, with a look that had ‘less of earth in it than heaven,’ “but your goodness to me—God bless you, Edward; God bless you,” she repeated, and they separated—for ever!” pp. 204—215.

We should be glad to quote something, if our limits allowed, of Crazy Bet,—John’s story of the law suit—Jane’s gift of the hundred dollars—another scene between Jane and Edward, and between Jane and David. Our readers, however, must be satisfied that the pen which wrote the passages quoted above, deserves praise and encouragement; and will join us in the wish that it may not lie idle, but go on to further labours in the cause of manners, morals, and religion.

INTELLIGENCE.

Cambridge Theological School.—In our last number was noticed a circular letter which had been issued with the purpose of procuring a sufficient sum for the erection of a building for the use of the Theological students at Cambridge. We understand that the design of soliciting subscriptions for this object is, for the present, postponed. But we desire that it should be well known that it is not given up. The object is so important that we feel ourselves called upon to keep it before the public; and though the peculiar state of the times has prevented the immediate adoption of any active measures with regard to it, we trust that it will not, on that account, lose its interest, or be forgotten. Even now we regard the Theological School at Cambridge, as offering advantages far superior to those which can be obtained at any other similar institution in the country. We should be rejoiced to see those advantages multiplied. They will be greatly so by the accomplishment of the present design. The literary facilities which may be enjoyed there are unequalled. But if they were equalled, or even surpassed, at any other place, we should still think that the freedom from sectarian influence, and technical theology, existing there, would throw an incalculable balance in favour of Cambridge. The great advantages of an edifice devoted to the accommodation of the students have already been ably stated in the circular, and in the article alluded to above. Let those who are desirous that religious examination should be unfettered, and religious discussion unconstrained, who wish to see truth established

by its own power, and christianity adorned with its own beauty, let all such exert themselves according to their opportunities and means, in assisting an institution, at which the instructors are chained to no long creed, and the pupils are subjected to no improper influence.

It has appeared to us, that beside the proposed subscriptions, it would be well that contributions should be collected in those congregations which favour the design. An opportunity of doing good will thus be given to many who do not feel able to put their names on a subscription list. And who more interested in the prosperity of the Theological School at Cambridge, than those who expect to call from it their religious guides?

Conversion of a Baptist Missionary in India.—Intelligence has been received, that one of the Baptist Missionaries in India, has been led to perceive the error of the doctrine of the Trinity, and reject it. We publish here, extracts from two letters on the subject. The first is from a gentleman of Boston, to one of the ministers of the city.

‘By the last arrival from Calcutta, I received the accompanying Sermon, which, as you will perceive, was delivered before an Unitarian congregation in Calcutta. It was occasioned by the first establishment in this Society, and pronounced at its first meeting.

When in Calcutta, it was my good fortune to enjoy an intimate intercourse with the author—[Mr. Adam.] He was sent to India as a Baptist Missionary, by the Society in London, and had, subsequently to his arrival, proved himself to be judicious, well-informed, and pious. About six months prior to my departure he engaged with Rammohun Roy, as an instructor in the Greek and Latin languages; but being at the same time employed with him and another gentleman of the same mission, in preparing a translation of the New Testament into the Bengalee, the subject of his conversation with Rammohun Roy alone, was most frequently one which had been suggested, or discussed at the other meetings.

‘In consequence of these conversations, the instructor was led to doubt, to examine, and at length, to renounce his previous opinions; and on the occasion above named, he made his first public confession of the change which had taken place in his belief.

‘The Society is not regularly organized, nor have they a proper place of worship; but Mr. Adam intended to appeal to the benevolence of the public for aid in erecting a chapel.

‘It would give me pleasure to be able to state, that this difference of opinion had not affected his standing in the good opinion of his brethren of the mission, and the public: but, in this as in almost every other instance, a difference in religious opinion has succeeded in destroying christian charity.

‘A letter from a friend, himself a Missionary, and a Trinitarian, speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Adam, acknowledging that, in his view, he appears to be as pious, and as sincere as at any former period of their acquaintance.’

The other is part of a letter from Mr. Adam himself, to Dr. Channing.

‘You are desirous, however, no doubt, of knowing who is writing to you. I came to India, as a Missionary from the Baptist Society in England. About three years and a half after my arrival in this country, that is, about five or six months ago, the convictions of my mind rendered it necessary for me to renounce Trinitarianism. I found, from that intercourse with the natives which I constantly cultivated, that on the ground of reason, (the only ground which it is possible to assume in propagating any religion,) I could no better maintain a three fold distinction in the divine nature, than the Hindoos could a distinction of many millions. You will not suppose from this, that when a Trinitarian, I made the trinity a frequent subject of discussion with natives. On the contrary, I, like others, avoided it as much as possible; but when they brought it forward as an objection, or endeavoured to draw a parallelism on this ground, between their own system and ours, I was compelled to meet the attack. With the assistance of friends, a house has been rented, in which I preach every Sunday, to a small congregation of Europeans, country born, and natives who understand English. The principal of these last, is Rammohun Roy, of whom you have no doubt heard, and whose writings you perhaps have seen. One of his late publications will accompany this, together with a few copies of a sermon which I lately published. I have in view, to commence a periodical work, which will include both a selection from European and American Theological publications, as well as original communications from friends and supporters in this country. I shall be glad to receive from you, with a view to the former of these a list of the most approved and liberal works conducted periodically in the U. S. together with specimens; if these, can be conveniently procured. It will give me pleasure to receive from you, whatever may illustrate the actual state of religion amongst all classes and denominations, and particularly the progress of Unitarianism, and the diversity of sentiment which may exist among those who in common reject the doctrine of the trinity.

May I beg the favour of your accepting the accompanying pamphlets, and of your forwarding the rest to the gentlemen whose names they respectively bear with my sincere regard.

I am my dear sir, yours very truly,
WILLIAM ADAM.

Calcutta, December 19, 1821.

Annual meeting of Ministers in Berry Street.—According to appointment, the meeting was opened at half past eight o'clock on the morning of Election day. Prayers were offered by the Rev. Samuel Willard, of Deerfield. The Rev. Dr. Ripley was chosen moderator, the Rev. H. Ware, jr. scribe.

The annual address on the given subject, was delivered by the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman.

The following addition was made to the rules of the meeting—No question relating to the private concerns of any minister, shall be discussed, until a vote has been taken without debate, whether the meeting will consider it or not.

Voted, that this meeting be known by the style of *the Ministerial Conference in Berry Street*.

Met again in the evening. The Rev. Messrs. Tuckerman, Pierce, and Walker, were appointed on the standing committee, for the ensuing year. Inquiry was made, agreeably to rule, concerning the state of religion in the land; and the meeting was addressed on this subject, by Mr. Goodwin, of Sandwich, Mr. Bates of Bristol, R. I. Mr. Walker, of Charlestown, and Dr. Ripley, of Concord.

A committee was appointed, to consider what methods may be adopted by this Conference for the more effectual extension of religious publications; to report next year.

The meeting was then adjourned, to the morning of Election day, 1823.

Unitarian Defendant.—We have seen the first number of a small publication bearing this title, issued at Charleston, S. C. and intended 'to be continued occasionally.' We learn from it, that the same method of ungenerous and slanderous attack is commencing in that place, which has been elsewhere prevalent, and that the Unitarians of the city, have been compelled to resort to public self defence. We cordially wish them success, and the divine blessing. Let them return decency for indecency, fairness for reviling, and argument for scurrility and defamation—and they may trust to see the gospel triumph against all the arts of mistaken and violent men. And if still assailed as emissaries of Satan, let them remember the words of their Lord—'if

they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household !'

The Evangelical Missionary Society in Massachusetts held its semi-annual meeting in the first church in Dedham, on the fifth day of June ; after transacting the usual business, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Lamson, an appropriate discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Harris, of Dorchester, from 2 Corinthians, ix. 12. *For the administration of this service, not only supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also, by many thanksgivings unto God.* The interest of the occasion was heightened by the presence of one who has been for many years a faithful servant of God in the employment of the society, and who communicated an account of the state and prospects of the people with whom he labours.

The following is a list of the donations, to the society, for the last six months.

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| <i>October 1821.</i> —By Icabod Tucker, Esq. of Salem, from a friend to the Society, in the Rev. Dr. Prince's Parish, | | \$50 |
| From P. O. Thacher, Esq. Collected at the annual } | meeting in Brattle Street, } | 83 72 |
| From P. O. Thacher, Esq. | | |
| By the Rev. Dr. Channing, from an unknown benefactor, | | 50 |
| From a Lady, in Dedham, | | 93 |
| By Rev. Dr. Ripley, from Ladies cent Society, | | 7 64 |
| Do. from Samuel Hoar, jr. Esq. | | 2 |
| Do. from Subscribers, | | 6 |
| By Rev. Dr. Harris, from Pupils in Mr. } | Mandell's School Dorchester, } | 4 56 |
| <i>January 1822.</i> —By Rev. Mr. Lowell, from the } | | |
| Female Sewing Society, | | 13 75 |
| <i>May 14.</i> —By Hon. L. Salstonstall, from the Ladies of } | the North Society in Salem, } | 47 |
| <i>28.</i> —By Rev. Dr. Prince, from the Ladies of his Society, | | |
| By Rev. Dr. Porter, from a Lady, | | 10 |
| <i>June 5.</i> —By Dea. Baker, collected at the semi-annual } | meeting, in the Rev. Mr. Lamson's Society, in Dedham, } | 31 16 |
| By Rev. Dr. Harris, collected in his Society, } | | |
| the first Parish, in Dorchester, | | 60 |
| | | <hr/> \$ 399 76 |

We take the liberty of publishing the letter, which accompanied one of the above donations.

Salem, May 25th, 1822.

SIR.—I have the honor to enclose to you, as Treasurer of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Massachusetts, thirty-one dollars, in behalf of the Ladies of the Society of the first church in Salem. We hope to be able to transmit to you a like sum annually ; as we have united ourselves together, under the conviction that your Society is founded on rational and just views of our

religion, and of human nature, that by a more general diffusion of knowledge among the unenlightened of our own country, and by addressing them, agreeably to the spirit of our religion, in the simple forms of truth and sincerity, much good has already been done; but that much still remains to be accomplished. Wishing all success to the pious purposes of your institution.

I am Sir, &c. &c.

BENJAMIN GUILD, Esq. Boston.

Washington, June 12.

Agreeably to previous arrangements, and the public notice given of them, the *First Unitarian Church* of the City of Washington was opened and dedicated on Sunday last, the 9th inst. The dedication Sermon was preached in the forenoon, to a large audience, by the Rev. Robert Little, Minister of the Congregation, followed by a sermon in the afternoon, by the Rev. Mr. Ed- dows, of Philadelphia; both services were accompanied by the strongest and finest choir we have heard in this city. The opening of this church is interesting to our community generally, inas- much as it adds a very handsome improvement to our city. The design of the edifice was furnished by Charles Bulfinch, Esq. Architect of the Capitol, and it is certainly highly creditable to his taste and judgment. The unfinished tower on the south end, we understand, is to be surmounted by a cupola and bell, and, when that shall be completed, we question whether there will be in the Union another building, uniting so much architectural elegance, within and without, with so little cost. The present minister of the Society, the Rev. Mr. Little, we understand, was recently Pastor of the Unitarian Church, at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England.

A NEW AND IMPORTANT PUBLICATION.—We have this moment received a copy of the following proposals, and hasten to lay them before our readers. It is an excellent design, and we hope will not fail to receive the extensive patronage it deserves.

Proposals for publishing by subscription, a collection of Essays and Disqui- sitions, by different Authors, on various important subjects in *Theology*, by JARED SPARKS.

It is well known to the theological student, and it can hardly have escap- ed the general inquirer, that some of the most valuable articles in *Theo- logy* are in a great measure excluded from public use and benefit. In this country, they are rarely or never published; and abroad, they are obtained with difficulty. Some of them are embodied in voluminous works, and not printed in a separate form; while others, however highly they are estima- ted for their general excellence, rational views of theology, and just criti-

cism, are not sufficiently adapted to prevailing sentiments of religion to induce booksellers to risk the expense of an edition.

Several theologians of the greatest piety and learning have been led by their inquiries to results, which have not accorded in all respects with the opinions of the multitude; and hence they have been proscribed by the popular voice, either as unsound in faith, or erroneous in their principles, because their faith and principles have not squared with the standard, which the majority have agreed to set up.

It has been thought, that a greater favour could not be conferred on the inquiring part of the community, nor a more essential service rendered to the cause of truth and rational piety, than to publish in numbers a series of selected articles in such a form that they may be conveniently circulated, and obtained at a moderate expense. Of this description is intended to be the work now proposed to the public. It will be the particular object of the Editor to select such articles, as have intrinsic merit, and are calculated to strengthen the faith of Christians in the divine origin and authority of their religion—to diffuse a critical knowledge of the Scriptures—to exhibit rational and consistent views of the Christian scheme—to inculcate principles of religious liberty and toleration—to encourage the exercise of piety and charity—and to secure obedience to the laws of Christ. And it will not be doubted, that writings of this character and tendency may be found in the works of such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Whitby, Emlyn, Clarke, Lardner, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Penn, Locke, Hoadly, Sykes, Price, Paley, Bishop Law, Blackburne, Priestley, Le Clerc, Farmer, Wakefield, Barbauld, Chandler, James Foster, Benson, Cogan, Watson, and many others eminent for their talents, learning, and virtues.

The character, which the work is expected to bear, may be understood from the following articles proposed among others to be published.

Whitby's Last Thoughts.

Sir Isaac Newton's Historical Account of two Corruptions of Scripture.

William Penn's Sandy Foundation Shaken.

Emlyn's Humble Inquiry.

Jeremy Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying.

Le Clerc on Inspiration.

Farmer on the Demoniacs of the New Testament.

Cogan's Letter to Wilberforce, on Hereditary Depravity.

Tracts and essays of much less dimensions, than the treatises here specified, may also be taken from larger works. It is not intended to preserve any particular arrangement in regard to the subjects of the articles. Each volume will contain an index, and such directions as will be necessary. A short biographical and explanatory notice will be prefixed to each piece, which seems to require any such aid to render it better understood; and a note may occasionally be added, where it is wanted for illustration. Nor in selecting will the peculiar theological sentiments of the writer be taken into consideration. It will be enough, that the article chosen has something to recommend it, either in the learning and ability with which it is written, the truths it contains, or the principles it inculcates.

Such are the outlines of the plan proposed, and it must be obvious to the friends of liberal inquiry, that a few volumes, containing articles of the above description judiciously collected, will be a most valuable acquisition to the library of every reader of theology.

CONDITIONS.

The work will be printed in a duodecimo form, on a new type and fine paper. Each volume will contain about 350 pages, and the price to subscribers will be *one dollar and twenty five cents*.

A volume will consist of three or four numbers, each of which, as far as practicable, will be a single article.

A number will be published once in two or three months, according to its size, so as to make a volume in six or eight months.

Each number will be handsomely and strongly stitched in covers, and forwarded by mail, or otherwise, as may be directed.

Any subscriber can close his subscription at the end of a volume, by giving timely notice.

Any person becoming responsible for more than six copies shall receive them for *one dollar* a volume.

The work will be commenced as soon as a sufficient patronage is afforded to defray the expense.

Communications may be addressed, post paid, to the Editor in Baltimore.

OBITUARY.

Died in this City, Mrs. SARAH LEE, wife of John Lee, Esq. Mrs. Lee was born and educated in England; but came to this country with her husband, in the year 1800, and had resided here almost twenty two years. Strong, therefore, as was her attachment to the land of her nativity, and to the relatives and friends whom she had left there, and time did not impair its strength, she felt that here was her *home*; and by few, if by any, even of those born among us, were the most generous sympathies of home more widely exercised. Here she gave free indulgence to those strong affections, which are the life spring of friendship, and of the happiest intercourse; and here she gathered round her a circle of friends, by whom her name and her virtues will be fondly cherished, as long as virtue shall be an object of their love, and friendship shall continue to be a source of their happiness.

But we do not bring this lady to the notice of our readers, with a view of obtruding upon them the sorrows of those who best knew her, and who are most deeply affected by her loss. Our object is rather, if indeed we may, to *provoke to emulation* of her simple, and unaffected piety; and of her enlarged, ever active, and unwearied benevolence. Her benevolence was not merely a sentiment, it was strictly speaking, a habit. We do not say indeed that it was so peculiar, that as striking examples are not, and may not often be recorded. But, we think, that such an example should not be permitted to pass away unnoticed. We think, that such a benefactress of society, should receive the last tribute that can be paid—and it is the least that is due—a simple memorial of her virtues, which may possibly excite others to *go and do likewise*.

Before she came to this country, Mrs. Lee was a member of the church of Christ, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Priestley, in Birmingham; and through her life, true to the principle, that every one has an equal claim to the right of private judgment in religion, neither her affection, nor her kindness, was diverted from any one, by a difference of opinion. Her aim was, *usefulness*; and she lived almost wholly for others. Her heart, and her hand, were always open to the wants of the miserable. Nor was this all. She was their *counsellor* and their *friend*. To hear of suffering that might be relieved, was at once to feel an impulse not to be resisted, to be herself the minister of that relief. There was no effort, within her capacity, which she was not ready to make, and no service, which she was not ready to perform, for any fellow creature in distress. We are not at liberty to

recount examples of personal labour and sacrifice, in behalf of the poor and distressed, which we think could scarcely be read by the most indifferent, without strong emotions. But few have been mourned by more, whose wants they have supplied, or whose sorrows they have comforted; and among the last impressions to be effaced from the memory of those who best knew her, will be the expressions of sympathy and grief, in her last days and at her death, from the number of poor who ceased not, with the strongest anxiety, to watch the progress of her disease; and who felt, in her departure, that they had lost one of their best earthly benefactors. This ruling affection of her heart was strong, even in death. A short time only before she expired, and while her friends about her, doubted whether she was conscious of what was passing around her, one of them incidentally mentioned a poor and suffering woman. The words instantly acted upon her with so much force, as to excite an effort to inquire concerning the sufferer. She would gladly have expended her last breath, in suggesting the means of doing good, which she was herself no longer able to accomplish.

Within the last thirty years, there has been an unexampled improvement of the female character. There has been too, as great improvement extended to society at large, by the just conceptions that have been obtained on the subject of benevolence; and by the means that have been devised, at once to check the progress of pauperism, to raise the character of the poor, and to make the communication of bounty, in every instance, subservient to the moral and religious improvement of those, who are the objects of it. In the plans for the accomplishment of these great ends, if females have not been the most, it is also certain that they have not been the least, important agents. Their care has indeed been given, principally, to those of their own sex. But the affluent and enlightened part of female society among us, under the influence of that divine charity, which warmed the heart of our gracious master, have extended their affections, their solicitude and exertions, to the instruction, and the temporal and eternal salvation of *the children of the poor*. Almost without money, the purest and most active charity has been indulged to an extent, which has relieved from an incalculable amount of distress; which has rescued many helpless children of the poor from moral ruin; which has raised many, from the most entire dependence, to a capacity of self-support; and greatly advanced the progress of mind, of virtue, and of happiness. This is a charity, in which the most important agents, because the most difficult to be obtained, are those who are willing *to act*; in which, not they who give from their abundant wealth are the best contributors, but they who are ready to give to the service *their strength, and their time*. In this comparatively small class of the benevolent, Mrs. Lee held a distinguished rank. Born of wealthy, and most respectable parents, and reared in all the ease and comfort which affluence can give, she seemed however to be as alive to the wants or sufferings of the poor, as if she had felt them all. May the power of her example be as strongly felt; and the principles of the gospel of Christ, which alone can inspire it, be more assiduously cultivated!—Reader, be admonished of thy end; and be awakened to consideration of the work, which God has given thee also to do. We can have no greater love of God, than we have of our fellow creatures; nor can our love of God, and of Christ, be otherwise so satisfactorily manifested and proved, nor so established and enlarged, as by an imitation of the benevolence of our Father, and our Saviour; by our faithful exertions for an amelioration of the sufferings, and an improvement of the condition, of all who are within the sphere of our influence.